DISCARD

A GENERAL HISTORY OF PORCELAIN

CHINESE

Figure of Kuan-Yin

Height 3 ft. 9 in.

In the possession of George Eumorfopoulos, Esq.

A General History of Porcelain

BY
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With Thirty-two Plates in Colour and Eighty in Black-and-White

Volume I

New York
FUNK AND WAGNALLS COMPANY
1921

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PREFACE

An attempt to write a connected history of the manufacture and decoration of porcelain from its far-off origin in China and its subsequent adoption in other lands certainly involves the writer in a series of difficulties. The story is not so clear as one would wish, and it is not easy to reconcile the conflicting statements of even the authorities one gladly respects and to decide on the most probable course of events from such information and specimens as we possess where the historical record is defective. In the preparation of this account the statements of every notable writer on the subject have been carefully weighed and sifted, and I have only put forward different opinions on what seem amply sufficient grounds, the reasons for which are stated so that the reader may have the issues clearly defined.

Much friendly intercourse during an active life has followed from my pursuits as a manufacturer and writer who has remained a student. I may humbly claim to have known personally a great majority of the principal porcelain-makers in Europe of my time, and have visited hundreds of porcelain factories as a welcome guest, while there are few movements of the time in which I have not participated. It is to be hoped that such a liberal educa-

tion in the art has given me sufficient knowledge to form a clear opinion of the problems that have been encountered and solved by so many able men, and I can only hope that some of the interest and enthusiasm I have enjoyed has been communicated to these pages.

In addition, I have familiarized myself with many of the notable public and private collections in England and other European countries, so that such faults as may exist in these pages are my own, though I hope they are few in number and not important.

I gratefully express my indebtedness to my friends, Mr. Bernard Rackham and Mr. E. G. Hawke, who have shared the onerous labours of reading portions or the whole of the proofs and have aided me by their knowledge and counsel. My grateful thanks are also due to the Keepers of the Collections in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Hertford House, for the facilities they have given me for a searching scrutiny of their treasures and the temporary displacement of the numerous specimens chosen for illustration.

William Burton.

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG all the subjects of human ingenuity and invention few have aroused such widespread interest or have been so much investigated during the past two centuries as the origins of the beautiful material called Porcelain, known in the common speech of so many Western countries as "China Ware," a phrase which emphatically distinguishes the country whose productions in this kind have long been famous all the world over. From an antiquity so remote as to be almost legendary ceaseless efforts have been made, by all those races and peoples who have cultivated the finer arts of living, to manufacture a superior kind of pottery which should minister to the luxury and refinement of the powerful and the wealthy, and the mere possession of which might stamp their rank almost as clearly as rich vestments and sumptuous furniture in abodes of corresponding magnificence.

Few races of mankind are known who have not taken advantage of the plasticity of clay and the readily discovered fact that it can be hardened by a moderate fire into sound and durable articles of common use, so that pottery is a general, almost a world-wide, product. But the invention of porcelain demanded an organized society, even a settled and peaceful state where workers could be employed on practically one task and where their livelihood was secure in the tranquil pursuit of this specialized

occupation. Great warlike states like Greece, Rome or Persia, by reason of the very activities and unsettlement which war produces, were not likely to pursue the arts of peace so far and their finest pottery is inferior in material and its inherent qualities to even the simpler kinds of porcelain.

What profound artistic feeling may be lavished on simple materials the Greek painted vases show, as well as the dainty terra-cotta figurines that have come forth from Greek tombs and mounds in such abundance; but, a few centuries saw the rise and decline of this art and their history is but as a day or as a tale that is told in comparison with that of porcelain, which still pursues its unrivalled way as monarch of all the species of pottery. Within the last two centuries a potter like Wedgwood, fired to emulation by this disinterred tomb-furniture, may strive to recall, in imitation, "the glory that was Greece," but these efforts are only as eddies in the tide and the flood-tide is ever toward the finest and best, and there Chinese porcelain towers supreme, defying all rivalry and all but the most worshipful approach.

For the last three centuries porcelain has been such a well-known thing in Europe, the daily apparatus of every meal, that a strong mental effort is needed to enable us to visualize its beginnings and the first tentative refinements that mark it off from all the simpler kinds of pottery. Its superior whiteness and hardness, and, above all, its precious translucence seem to stamp its sovereign rank. What patient and continued effort in investigation, and what repeated experiments with mixtures of earths and powdered rocks must have prepared the way for the first hints of such a triumph!

The wealthiest collectors of to-day treasure the masterpieces produced, in China, for the great Ming Emperors, yet these were but the mid-season's blooms of a prolific tree that had already blossomed abundantly through the lives of many generations of men, where each fresh generation produced some new and wonderful bloom to reward and delight it. Along with the sustained effort of experiment and artistic refinement or boldness, accident obviously played no little part in addition, for the freaks and wonders of one generation—usually attributed to the special intervention of some spiritual being or minor deity—became a known and successful process at a later period, when further observation and reflection had mastered the elusive secret. So much is this the case that every great period of the art of porcelain in China furnishes us with specimens of two distinct classes of production: what we may best describe as the examples which are most distinctive of that particular age; and, in addition, a much smaller number of "archaistic" examples where the potter was plainly striving, either openly or covertly, to bring forth once more examples like those of an earlier age so that he might add to his repute as a potter or gain the monetary rewards that the clever counterfeiter snatches from the eager collector at all times. Methods and processes may survive or they may be rediscovered, but artistic types once overthrown by revolutions and the coming of new dynasties with different racial or cultural ideals, fall into disuse and are completely abandoned or forgotten.

The famous T'ang horses and modelled figures of nobles, warriors and ladies, made in soft terra-cotta and evidently produced for the delight of a horse-breeding, warrior race,

vanish completely from the haunts of living men to the tombs of the departed and, when representations of such things again appear, this time in painted ornament on vases and jars of white porcelain, they bear the stamp of another race in both men and animals.

There can be no doubt that occasional specimens of Chinese porcelain found their way to Europe in the course of the trading voyages of the early Middle Ages, but these are of no importance, could we establish their history ever so clearly, for it was not until Eastern porcelain became an article of commerce in the interchange of goods between the East and the West that its beauty and, above all, its transparency brought it into such esteem that the manufacture of European imitations became almost as much a matter of research as the fabulous "philosopher's stone." The important city-states of northern Italy with their extensive Levantine trade were the true pioneers in the introduction of Oriental porcelain into Europe, and Venice with its established glass-making industry probably took the lead in the experiments in the manufacture of a sort of porcelain made from mixtures of glass and white clay. There are reputed experiments of this kind made at the end of the fifteenth or at the very commencement of the sixteenth century, but no specimens of these or of slightly later experiments at Ferrara can now be identified, though there can be no doubt whatever that the experiments were made.

The earliest European porcelain of which we possess authentic examples was produced at Florence under the patronage of the powerful Medici family towards the end of the sixteenth century, about 1575–85. In the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum

a few of these precious relics may still be inspected, and they demonstrate clearly enough that this porcelain never passed beyond the stage of experiment—despite the charming quality of the material, undoubtedly a typical glassy porcelain far antedating the French soft-paste which it closely resembles. Why the manufacture of such beautiful material was so quickly abandoned we shall never know, but we may surmise that the difficulties and cost of the few specimens that were successfully produced, or the changing whim of its noble patron, soon caused the manufacture to be given up. One thing we know with certainty about this Florentine porcelain now, that it was made by mixing together an impure china clay (Terra di Vicenza), a fine white sand and a considerable proportion of glass, and it is thus in the direct line between the soft Persian porcelain and the earliest porcelains of France and England which, at a much later date, were made from similar materials, though there is a long gap in time between the Medicean porcelain and the earliest of these.

It is to the French potters of the latter half of the seventeenth century, and not to the alchemists and their patrons, that we must award the credit of setting on foot the first real manufacture of a species of white translucent pottery, which, differing from Chinese porcelain in almost every particular, was not unworthy to be compared with it. Experimenters at Rouen and St. Cloud invented the old French porcelain which was to attain unbounded fame from the productions of the Royal factories at Vincennes and Sèvres, and in England a similar ware was manufactured at Bow and Chelsea during the eighteenth century, but all these labours, whether merely

experimental or well established, must be referred to in their own place.

Surpassed for the moment and apparently hopelessly left behind, the alchemist was soon to take full revenge. Johann Friedrich Böttger, an alchemist, in an endeavour to manufacture crucibles which would support an intense heat, finally invented a white porcelain comparable to the Chinese, and some time between 1710 and 1712 the first European true porcelain was manufactured at Meissen.

A GENERAL HISTORY OF PORCELAIN

CHAPTER I

CHINESE PORCELAIN

THE HAN DYNASTY (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) AND THE T'ANG DYNASTY (618–906 A.D.)

UNDER the governance of these early Chinese dynasties, which, together, held sway over China proper nd large parts of eastern Asia for more than a thousand ears, the potter's art manifests one of its early periods active ferment, and it is to this era that we must ok for the beginnings of the experiments and researches nich resulted in the invention of porcelain. Knowledge of any kinds and workmen, almost certainly, were brought to China from many parts of Asia, or even, as it would em from Europe, and experimental craftsmanship of a gh order was vigorously pursued in many directions. ne manufacture of pottery and glass, bronze-founding and amelling on metals were prominent among the applied ts of the period, and, fortunately, owing to the burial stoms of the time authentic specimens of the handiwork the era are well known among students of Chinese anuities. Among these early treasures we can now identify veral distinct kinds of pottery which indicate considerle variations in technique, in the selection of materials,

in methods of shaping and of firing the wares; all, undoubtedly, dating from this far-off time and preparing the way for the first appearance of porcelain.

One of the simplest kinds of pottery material used throughout this famous era and largely employed in the fabrication of the splendid modelled figures of men and animals,[1] has a softish, gritty, earthen body, very similar to that of the famous "Delft" ware of Holland, made so many centuries later. Other examples of these ancient wares are shaped in a body-material something like that of our common red bricks, and this is always harder than the light-coloured pottery, either because it was fired more or because an incipient vitrifaction was brought about owing to the excess of iron compounds in the clay, to which the strong reddish brown colour is also due. A number of specimens have been found, both in the soft and the hard materials, which have been washed over with a white clay and not glazed at all but painted with unfired red and black pigments which have all the appearance of coloured earths.

The surviving examples also seem to indicate that most of the pottery of this era was glazed, and though the surface of the glaze has, generally, decayed from its prolonged entombment and is now strongly iridescent and even inclined to flake away from the body, we can say definitely that a pale straw yellow and a darker greenish glaze (very like the colour of our modern bottle glass) were in common use, while the yellow glaze varies in tone even to a deep brownish tint. At this time, too,

[1] A considerable number of these examples have passed through my hands, sent by collectors after they had been broken in transit, and it was possible to restore them by using the soft, gritty clay scraped from the insides of their bodies, so that no doubt as to the nature of the material can exist.

e universal practice of mottling the various coloured azes together appears on this Chinese pottery, just as makes its appearance in every country where similar azes have been used.

That we are able to speak so definitely of these early inese wares arises from the widespread practice among e various ancient peoples of arranging in the grave the departed person of consequence, pottery models all the important accessories of his daily life, which these Chinese graves included models of his dwelling-use, private or family shrine, cattle-folds with the cattle, eep, dogs, and poultry, together with hinds and servants fitting to his rank, and figures of half-human creatures hich may have been intended to represent his guardian irits. In addition, and most valuable for our purposes, ere were vases for various kinds of grain and for wine, odels of cooking-ranges with low-relief indications of e cooking-pots, while most carefully made of all were e vessels used to contain the sacrificial wine and incense. nally, we must mention the groups of small standing seated figures which portray the actors, musicians, d other attendants, some of the latter evidently repre-nting domestic servants, as they bear wine-ewers or shes of cakes and fruit.

Among the widespread potters' devices followed by e T'ang potters in their turn, we must just mention eir use of mottled clays and glazes, and the veined or rbled wares in which the piece has obviously been shioned from a cake of mixed clays, whose red and yellow eaks and veinings produce a finely variegated surface. course, where a piece has been broken this veining will found to run throughout its substance and is not

confined to the surface, as would be the case with a mottled glaze.

Such activity and ingenuity could have only one result in a country where the essential ingredients of porcelain existed in abundance and in many districts formed an outcrop among the hills or in the sides of the deep river valleys. Finally, the spirit of active investigation was to reach its reward in the discovery of clays that would remain white at the highest temperature of the furnace, and on due admixture with certain powdered rocks would yield the translucent substance which we call porcelain. This discovery was apparently reserved for a later generation to achieve, for while we have, in many public and private collections, a wide range of earthenware and hard-fired stonewares, with excellent glazes of many colours, I am unaware of definite evidence of the existence of porcelain that can have been made under the T'ang dynasty. All the evidence produced, so far, would give no earlier date for the manufacture of undoubted porcelain than the opening years of the Sung period, some half century or so later, though in fairness it must be pointed out that this is only a short interval and the first Sung methods can only have been a continuation of those practised by the T'ang potters. If, as we know to have been the case, the Sung potters were able to develop a manufacture of porcelain of supreme distinction almost at the commencement of that era, it can only have been because the way had been soundly paved and the materials and methods had been practically prepared for them by their immediate predecessors and awaited only that breath of fresh vigour which so often comes with the uplift of a new dynasty, whose officials are full of zeal, activity and enterprise.

THE SUNG PORCELAINS

With the firm establishment of the peace-loving Sung dynasty (960–1279), we reach a period of fervent revival in the more ancient arts of China and at the same time of great activity in discovery and fertile invention in every branch of art, bespeaking intellectual direction of the first order, so that the period has often been spoken of as the "Augustan Age" of Chinese history. It is in no mere spirit of praising the days of their ancestors that later Chinese poets and writers have recited the glories of this age, claiming for it the highest praise as expressing in every direction the pure spirit of Chinese culture, uncontaminated by external influences. We have ample evidence in its sculpture, paintings, bronzes and porcelains —apart from its literature—that the age was one of fine intellectuality, for all its works breathe a spirit of restrained power dignified almost to austerity. The museums and private collections of Europe or of America contain specimens sufficient to stamp the Chinese art of this period as being in the highest rank, and we know that much more exists that cannot be exported. Whatever may have been the tentative and sporadic successes of earlier days, the manufacture of porcelain on the large scale was now definitely established in various parts of the Empire, and important and sustained advances quickly followed, for the keenest artistic perception marched hand-in-hand with rare technical accomplishment. Indeed, we may safely say that, regarded as examples of the potter's art in all that pertains to form and the colour-effects possible in porcelain glazes, the Sung specimens that have been handed down to us are of supreme importance, anticipating or foreshadowing

in many ways the more renowned triumphs of later ages. These glorious early productions were still confined in their colour-effects, almost entirely, to such as could be obtained by the use of a wide range of rich or delicately tinted glazes on wares varying from reddish brown stoneware, often thick and heavy in substance, to the most beautiful translucent porcelain.

Though the Sung porcelains are famous for the consummate skill displayed in the use of coloured glazes, we also find among them the first tentative efforts to make and use vitreous enamels fired to the surface of the finished glaze. These overglaze enamels are always believed to have been adopted from the practice of the enameller on metal, whose work was also in high repute. Whatever their origin they were, for a time, applied but sparingly and occasionally, so that it would have seemed incredible that in later decorative schemes of porcelain-painting they would oust all other colours from favour. Naturally, too, at this early period the known enamel-colours were few in number and restricted in range, as only those produced by the oxides of iron and copper (various shades of brick red and green) were known. The splendid range of brilliant enamels obtained from gold, silver and antimony (ruby, rose colour, yellow and orange) were the discoveries of much later ages, and they attained their full perfection during the eighteenth century.

Literary evidence of the activities of the porcelain-makers of the period we have in abundance, for contemporary Chinese writers enumerate, often with high-flown and poetical descriptions which border on the mythical, some sixteen kinds of porcelain made by various Sung potters. The most highly renowned varieties were the *Ju-Yao*,

Ko-Yao and *Ting-Yao*,[1] together with the *flambé* wares of Chün-chou and the historically famous céladon wares (most famous those of Lung-ch'üan), which were to exercise such a great and powerful influence on the works of remote generations of potters in countries far beyond the ken of their first makers.

If the art of the Sung period seems to express the essentials of pure Chinese culture we may, without hesitation, give the place of honour, where the potter's art is concerned, to the céladon porcelains of this period. The ware itself, though thick-walled and massive, is nearly always a true porcelain, wrought into forms of subtle, though substantial, beauty. We have groups of tall and slender vases, deep bowls and wide dishes, usually ornamented with vigorously incised or carved patterns, or bearing embossed decoration in high or low relief, all toned and intensified by the overlying glaze. The glaze, always the most charming feature of the ware, is particularly unctuous in quality and is generally of considerable thickness.

Under this generic name, "céladon," we find many shades of green displaying the various tints known as "olive," together with tones which recall fresh young grass in full sunlight, or the various colours of the mineral jade.

During the last fifty years a considerable body of special literature has appeared devoted entirely to the manufacture of céladon wares and, more particularly, to the information which may be derived from what is known of their distribution over Asia, Africa and Europe, as an index of the channels of world-trade during the Middle Ages of our era.

The céladon porcelains won great renown wherever

[1] *Yao* is the equivalent of our English words, "Ware" or "Pottery."

they were taken and became favourite articles of trade throughout the Moslem dominions and in all the countries where Chinese and Arab traders penetrated. Despite the undoubted Chinese origin of the wares they have often been spoken of as "Martabani" or Martaban wares, because great consignments travelled overland from their places of origin in China to the ports of Further India,[1] and were shipped thence by the regular routes of Arab shipping to all the ports between the Persian Gulf and Zanzibar. Considerable quantities appear to have reached Europe by way of Cairo or the ports on the Syrian coast.

By the fourteenth century "porcelain of Sinant," i.e. of China, was mentioned in the inventories of the possessions of kings and great nobles in Europe, and by the middle of the fifteenth century it had become so well known that we find Mathieu de Coussy, the historian of Charles VII of France, recording, in 1447, a letter addressed to the Sultan of Babylon by the hand of one Jean de Village, the agent of the famous French merchant Jacques Cœur of Bourges, asking for certain trading privileges in the

[1] The widespread finds of céladon porcelains in all the countries open to Arab traders during the early Middle Ages have lead some Arabic scholars, like the late Professor Karabacek of Vienna, to claim its manufacture as well as its distribution for the Moslem peoples.

This theory is untenable on many grounds, and it is now accepted as beyond any reasonable doubt that the céladon porcelains were originally made in China.

The discovery, some thirty years ago, of the site of a factory for such wares at Sawan-Kalok, 300 miles north of Bangkok in Siam, and the recovery there of waste pieces, kiln supports and other clear proofs of a centre of manufacture are now well known. The legendary local accounts of these kilns ascribe their foundation to Para Roang, King of Sawan-Kalok (circa 1350), but, he is also said to have brought 500 artificers from China, which seems further confirmation of the view of the Chinese origin of céladon. There is a good collection of the results of this find in the British Museum, which affords ready means of comparison with the Chinese and other céladons. The glaze of this Siamese céladon is thin and watery looking when compared with the Chinese, Corean or Japanese céladons, and must be considered as lacking the finer and more enduring qualities of the better known wares.

CHINESE : SUNG

Bowl, white glaze. Strong fine brush work in golden brown
Height 7 in., diameter $10\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Presented by Robert Mond, Esq.

dominions of the Sultan. This letter concludes with the interesting request: "*Si te mande par le dit Ambassadeur un present à savoir trois ecuelles de pourcelaine de Sinant, deux grands plats ouvertz de pourcelaine; deux touques verdes de pourcelaine, deux bouquetz de pourcelaine ouvré.*"

From this time onwards we find increasing mention of Chinese porcelain in Europe: at first, mainly in the inventories of the belongings of kings and great nobles, but very soon it is enumerated among the household treasures of wealthy merchants in Central Europe and, beyond a doubt, it was known in Tudor England. The famous "Archbishop Warham's Cup," so long preserved at New College, Oxford, is a céladon bowl mounted in English silver-gilt, which cannot have reached England later than the reign of Henry VIII, as the date mark of the mount is referable to about 1530.

To return from this somewhat lengthy but necessary digression on the distribution of early Chinese porcelains we must give some consideration to other varieties of Sung wares, and particularly to the white porcelains. One of the earliest white wares of which we have contemporary notice is the "white ware of Ting Chou," for this is mentioned in the pharmacopœia of the T'ang dynasty, compiled about 650 A.D.[1] It is a moot point whether this should be reckoned as porcelain or as a species of fine stoneware, and various writers have described it as "porcellanous stoneware," which is only a way of getting round the difficulty. My opinion is that a fine white stoneware was made at this place during the T'ang period, while in Sung times a beautiful white porcelain was certainly

[1] See Hirth, *Ancient Chinese Porcelain*, p. 4. Also Hobson's *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. I., p. 89.

made here. This white porcelain is said to have been at its best in the periods Chêng Ho and Hsüan Ho (1111–25), and we learn that the potters accompanied the Court when it fled south before the Tartar invasion in 1127. The manufacture was apparently re-established in the neighbourhood of Ching-tê Chên, and this ware, known as *nan ting* (Southern Ting), is said to have been so like the original ware as to deceive all but the most expert.

This white *Ting-Yao* is of fine and compact texture, and is translucent in the thinner specimens, so that it is one of the typical early porcelains. The glaze is of ivory tone and where it is thick or uneven forms yellowish or brownish tears, which were regarded by the early Chinese collectors as signs of genuineness. Remembering the varying fortunes of the different factories and the forced migrations of the potters, we need feel no surprise that specimens differing widely in quality frequently bear this designation. Thus, we have the finer wares called white Ting (*pai ting*) and flour Ting (*fên ting*), as well as a coarser, yellowish, much crackled and stained, opaque ware which is consequently called *t'u ting*, i.e. earthen Ting.

According to contemporary writers the undecorated white pieces were most highly prized at the time, but incised and moulded or stamped ornament was freely used, and this is found on the greater proportion of the examples in Western collections. The keen sense of observation shown by the nature-loving Sung artists, so magnificently displayed in their paintings on silk, etc., is also well exemplified in the treatment of birds, water plants, and other decorative features of the wares under consideration. One may cite the well-known examples

in the collections of Mr. Eumorfopoulos and Mr. Benson, for they have exhibited them with the greatest liberality, both in London and elsewhere, to the great advantage of other students and collectors.

Ju-Yao, as its name implies, was made at Ju-Chou in the province of Honan, in northern central China. Traditionally, this particular porcelain was a reproduction or imitation of mythical earlier wares, whose praises were sung by wildly enthusiastic Chinese writers of the period, as being "Blue as the sky after rain, when seen between clouds." So far as one may judge by such specimens as have found their way to Europe that seem at all likely to represent this once-famous porcelain, the ware was an early and immature type of céladon, and we should probably be nearer the meaning of the Chinese writer if we read, "Green as the sky," etc.

Ko-Yao is said to have been made by a potter named Chang the Elder, hence the name, which means "elder brother's ware." Apparently there were two brothers named Chang, who had separate factories in the Liu-t'ien district in the province of Chekiang, but the precise date of their activities is uncertain, so that we cannot say definitely whether their porcelains were made in the earlier or later Sung period. According to different Chinese authorities quoted by Mr. Hobson, we have nothing more precise than that these brothers were certainly at work under the Sung dynasty and that one account narrows their date to the period of the Southern Sung (1127–1279).[1] As to the ware itself, the various accounts of its appearance and colour-qualities seem to indicate céladon porcelains

[1] It may be noted, in passing, that even this suggested emendation gives a period of 150 years as the limits of the time within which these brothers were at work.

varying in colour from a pale greyish white to greyish green and even greenish yellow tints ; and the best authenticated specimens to be seen in Europe are certainly céladon wares of fine quality.

Tz'ŭ Chou, a place formerly in the Chang-tê Fu in Honan and now included in the Kuang-p'ing Fu in Chih li, has given its name to a great variety of wares decorated by glazing, painting, marbling, incising, and inlaying. We cannot wonder at the variety of wares bearing this name remembering that the factory probably dates from the period of the Sui dynasty (589–617 A.D.), and is reputed to be still at work in this twentieth century. Any factory boasting such a lengthy existence must send forth many pieces calculated to puzzle the collector, for, while some paramount style or styles would be continuously followed we usually find, under such conditions, much imitation of successful or popular wares which had originated at other factories. Moreover, the difficulties of assigning an approximate date to any particular specimen are vastly increased, so that it is necessary to be always on one's guard in order not to confound modern with ancient examples.

The white wares made at Tz'ŭ Chou during the Sung period are difficult to identify now with absolute certainty, though they are said to have been highly esteemed at the time of their manufacture ; but painted wares were freely made and here we are on safer ground. Examples whose origin and period seem clearly established exhibit a greyish buff body of coarse porcelain, generally overlaid with a " slip " coating of fine white clay and finished with a dullish glaze of delicate creamy-white tint. On the slip coating, or on the glaze itself, the early examples bear somewhat

CHINESE : SUNG

Porcelain Vase carved down through brown-black glaze
Height 9¾ in., diameter 7¾ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Porcelain Vase carved down through white glaze; touches of black-brown glaze telling as pigment on biscuit
Height 7¼ in., diameter 8¼ in.

sketchy but cleverly drawn designs in soft black or warm brown pigments, while sometimes these colours have been applied in broad, thin washes, with the details of the patterns sharply incised in the clay.

As one would expect from the general history of Chinese porcelain and the successive stages of its development, the examples from this factory include vases covered with incised or crisply carved floral scrolls—from which flowers bud and blossom—enclosed above and below by bands of foliage or varieties of formal ornament—usually of key pattern—and gaily enriched with pale, bright glazes of transparent copper green or turquoise colour. So that, in Tz'ŭ Chou we have another factory to add to the long list of those which made extensive use of this beautiful colour-scheme—always a favourite one with all the Oriental potters from Anatolia to Japan.

A more uncommon note is struck by the use of a maroon-coloured slip, found on some early examples, which was probably obtained by mixing finely ground and washed smithy-scale—a mixture of oxides of iron of strong colouring power—with the clay slip. Later, perhaps, but still at an early period, enamel-colours of iron red and copper green make their appearance and, with the addition of underglaze blue, the palette appears to have been complete in its restricted simplicity.

Chün-Chou, the modern Ju-Chou district in the province of Honan, gave its name to a series of famous glazes ranging through a variety of tints known as sky blue, millet colour, plum bloom, rose purple and cherry-apple red, to aubergine purple and furnace transmutations or *flambés*.

Judging by existing specimens the body of these wares varied considerably in quality, being sometimes little more

than a yellowish brown stoneware or terra-cotta, while in the finest examples it is a true, though not very refined porcelain, so that later Chinese collectors have divided the wares into two classes, *sha t'ai* (sandy, or coarse-grained body) and *tz'u t'ai* (porcelain body). But whatever may be the body of any particular specimen, the special repute of the wares is due to their glazes, which are thick and opalescent, and of such sluggish fluidity, when melted, that they generally stop short of the base of the piece, ending in an irregular roll or running in tears with a heavy terminal drop. Where the glaze runs thin, as on the edges of lips or rims, it is transparent and often colourless, but where it collects in pools it glows with deep and subtle colours, while it nearly always presents evidence of a faint " crackle."

These glazes usually exhibit irregular eccentric markings, to which Chinese collectors have given fancifully descriptive names, such as " flames of blue," while the irregular lines or " partings " of broken colour are frequently called " earthworm marks." These last irregularities seldom appear on any but the finer glazes and, like the " tear stains " on the Ting wares, they have long been regarded as signs of authentic age. Personally I dissent from this view, for the potters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who were clever enough to reproduce such glazes with success would experience no difficulty with the markings, which come unbidden, for they are inherent features of glazes of this type and should be regarded as additional proof of the success of the imitation—an imitation which, in this case, amounts to rediscovery.

The glaze which bears the distinguishing appellation " flames of blue " in all probability owes this title to the resemblance of its markings, in form and colour, to the

CHINESE: SUNG

White Vase, with raised ornament
Height 12 in., diameter $5\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Globular Vase (Tzŭ Chou). Dark brown glaze, incised fish and lotus
Height $9\frac{5}{8}$ in., diameter 9 in.

Céladon glazed Bottle. Pierced outer case
Height $11\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter 6 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

tongues of blue flame produced by the "blowing-tube" which appears to have been used for blowing up the furnace fires. Blasts of air driven through the smouldering fuel would produce long blue wavering flames of burning carbon-monoxide gas; and the resultant glaze is a *type* of *flambé* in which an opalescent blue is the prevailing tint.

In striking contrast to the céladon glazes, which as a class are cool and restful in tone, we have an almost infinite variety of mottled red glazes rather crudely nicknamed "Mule's liver" and "Horse's lung" by the Chinese, which display almost every shade of red from a pink tone—that is little more than a blush—to a deep purplish red. The céladon glazes, too, are generally of uniform and unbroken tint, such shading as they display being usually due to thicker or thinner layers of the glaze, often cunningly devised to lie in the carved or incised patterns over which they are applied so as to heighten the effect of the relief. The red glazes, which owe their colour to copper in its lowest stages of oxidation (just as the colour of the céladons is due to oxide of iron under similar conditions), are generally opaque in all but the thinnest layers, and are usually diversified by streaks or broad passages of grey, blue or purple opalescence, often fancifully compared to the imprint of the furnace flames; a notion which seems to exercise peculiar fascination over those writers who have never fired a potter's kiln and who, apparently, visualize it as a wildly whirling mass of flames, impinging directly on the wares. Why the pieces were enclosed in saggers, which effectually protected them from the flames, never seems to require consideration from these masters in "pottery of the imagination." The Chinese term, "Furnace Transmutation," is much more picturesque, and though in one

sense every finished glaze is a furnace transmutation, there is something appropriate in the application of such a name to these special glazes, which seem to bear for ever on their surface the changing play of the enveloping flames in the kiln. By what accidents in firing the first hints of these red glazes were obtained it is idle to speculate now; but the Chinese have always been noted for the patient skill with which they sedulously follow the hints that even failures may give to the potter, so that we need not wonder at the rapid development of the red glazes of varied hue and the marvelling admiration bestowed on them by both the potter and his patrons.

Much speculation and many theories have been lavished on the origin, in time and place, of the copper-red glazes, but we have clear evidence that they were made during the Sung period and we can point to a considerable number of existing specimens dating from this time.

The finest examples of these early wares known to us are usually deep, rectangular, quatrefoil or hexafoil flower-pots or shallow bulb-bowls, exhibiting soft and luscious glazes of many tints ranging from dove grey to exquisite broken shades of crushed strawberry, crimson, and soft rich purple. The bases of these flower-pots, bowls, and stands are covered with a brownish olive glaze, and they invariably bear a ring of "spur marks" from the pointed kiln supports on which they rested during the firing. In addition, there is usually an incised numeral under the base, which probably indicates the size of the piece.[1]

If any confirmation were needed of the high repute which these wares enjoyed among Chinese collectors it

[1] See Hobson's *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. I., p. 114, for a discussion of the questions concerned in the significance of these numerals.

CHINESE: CHÜN-CHOU (*CHÜN-YAO*)

Bulb Bowl, with "Transmutation" glaze.
Height 3¼ in., diameter 7⅝ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum. Presented by the National Art Collections Fund.

seems to be provided by the repeated attempts made in later centuries to reproduce their distinguished qualities, so that we need not be surprised to find imitations of them figuring in the list of porcelains made at the Imperial factory in the eighteenth century, and doubtless the manufacture of such pieces has continued to the present time in various parts of China.

It has been suggested that at different periods in the long history of Chinese porcelain, either because the red glazes fell into temporary disfavour at Court or from other unexplained reasons, the copper-red glazes were not made, at all events at the Imperial kilns. We may note one such period during the later reigns of the Ming dynasty, when this great house was obviously tottering towards its fall. This seems all the more singular in view of the use, at this very period, of underglaze red which has a close chemical affinity with the red glazes. It seems to me that such a fact can only be explained by the Imperial Court prescribing a style of decoration in which rather precise painting and drawing could be displayed to advantage, as it accompanies the increasing use of delicately drawn designs in underglaze blue with enrichments in enamel-colours, where the more manageable iron red, which is often lavishly used, supplies the warm tones of the painter's palette.

Chien-Yao (a title *now* used by the Chinese for the white porcelains, *blancs de Chine*), as known in the Sung period was a mottled black glaze made at Chien-yang in the north of the province of Fukien. These subtle and glistening glazes are distinguished among Oriental connoisseurs by the title "hare's-fur markings," and seem to have been equally admired by the Japanese, Coreans and Chinese. Whatever its origin the glaze is of some scientific interest,

for the glistening appearance as well as the fine striation both arise from the fact that microscopically thin plates of artificial mica crystals segregate from the cooling glaze, while it is still somewhat fluid, and arrange themselves with their long axes parallel to the lines of flow in the glaze, thus producing the optical effect which the Orientals have likened to hare's-fur.[1]

When the internal conditions of China were stabilized once again the manufacture of porcelain was quickly re-established, and during the reigns of K'ang-Hsi and his son, Yung-Chêng, and that of his grandson, Ch'ien-Lung, it enjoyed a renewed period of magnificent activity, which lasted roughly from 1675 to the closing years of the eighteenth century. During this period of about 130 years we witness what would appear to be the final period of splendour in the history of Chinese porcelain, for, throughout the nineteenth century few porcelains of outstanding merit were made that can claim either technical or artistic novelty, while the condition of contemporary China is too disturbed and its position as a united state seems too uncertain to enable observers at a distance to indulge in the mildest prophecy, however much one may hope that the tale of Chinese porcelain is, even yet, not fully told.

I have already referred to the earliest white porcelains —the best known of which is the *Ting-Yao*, made at Ting-Chou, the modern Chên-ting Fu, in the northern province of Chih-li,[2] so that it is only necessary to direct the reader's attention to this account. It seems impossible, however, to close this chapter on the Sung porcelains without specially

[1] I possess a number of sections of such glazes, which, under the microscope, demonstrate this point beyond possibility of doubt.

[2] See pp. 9–10.

emphasizing the refined quality of this delicate white ware—one of the greatest triumphs of the age, for no later wares surpassed this in sheer and simple beauty. We have only to recall the care and skill which all the later potters of China lavished on their endless profusion of white porcelains to realize how completely they satisfied certain moods of the Chinese mind.

THE MING PORCELAINS

For some three hundred years (1368–1643) China—now at its widest extent of territorial dominion, exercising a loose suzerainty over many central Asiatic tribes and in the full plenitude of its powers as an Empire—was ruled by the famous dynasty known as "The Ming," which was distinguished for a succession of able and cultured emperors and statesmen to which the history of mankind offers few parallels.

All the arts—from architecture, painting, and sculpture to bronze-founding, metal-working and enamelling—flourished with the utmost vigour under their vigilant and enlightened patronage, and it was undoubtedly one of the greatest, if, indeed, not *the* greatest period of Chinese porcelain, whether we consider the range and quality of noble examples that have come down to us, or the supreme technical and artistic skill displayed through an infinite variety of types and decorative styles.

Probably much of this success in porcelain resulted from the concentration of the industry at Ching-tê Chên, for, with the notable exception of the factory at Têhua, in the province of Fuchien—which was founded in early Ming times and is world-renowned for its modelled figures,

cups, etc., made in fine white or creamy porcelain—all the famous Sung factories were abandoned, possibly on the removal of their workpeople to Ching-tê Chên, or thereafter, confined themselves to the manufacture of such ordinary wares as satisfied purely local demands, and so ceased to exercise any further influence on the development of porcelain, though their wares are now being eagerly sought after by Western collectors in default of better things.

The first great factory at Ching-tê Chên was destroyed during the wars which marked the close of the Tartar domination, but it was rebuilt by Hung-Wu (1368–98), though there is some uncertainty as to the exact date when its activities were resumed—a matter of minor importance. As Ching-tê Chên was thus adopted as the site of the Imperial factory, which has continuously retained the Imperial patronage through so many centuries and dynastic changes, we can readily understand how migrant potters from all the scattered Sung factories settled at this place, to continue and develop their craft under the most favourable auspices. Ultimately, as the work expanded and the Imperial patronage and interest grew into a settled policy, Ching-tê Chên became the most famous centre of porcelain manufacture that the world has ever known, for henceforward practically all the artistic porcelains of China were made at this town, with the exception of the white porcelains of Fuchien which became so famous at a later date.

One immediate result followed on this concentration of the industry, for we witness, within a brief term of years, the introduction of many improvements which were steadily advanced to perfection. Almost every process of fabrica-

CHINESE : MING

Vase

Height with stand 18¾ in., diameter 8 in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Pierce Library
Eastern Oregon University
1410 L Avenue
La Grande, OR 97850

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La Grande, OR 97850

tion or decoration seems to have been minutely subdivided, each worker executing only a share, and often a very limited share, of one step in the process. So skilful did the numerous craftsmen become at their narrow occupation, under the supreme direction of a succession of learned and able superintendents appointed by the Court, that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the potters of Ching-tê Chên, from this time forward, reproduced on demand practically all the delicate or superb glaze effects of the earlier Chinese potters, and added a majestic succession of new effects such as their predecessors never conceived.

Apparently the first important departure from traditional methods was an adoption, with suitable variations, of the technique of the enameller on metal, where, by tracing the outlines and salient features of a design in strongly raised clay lines, broad masses or finer details could be filled in with a few rich coloured glazes so as to produce an effect analogous to that of a boldly designed work in cloisonné enamel on metal.

Many noble specimens of this virile style of porcelain decoration have fortunately survived for our delight and instruction, as every great collection in Europe boasts some striking examples of this type. Such pieces, generally attributed to the early Ming potters, are massive, bold and impressive in every sense. They were fashioned in a true porcelain of a coarse, strong kind which is, however, so far removed from the white material to which the name is generally applied that it will be found to resemble an oatmeal biscuit in colour and texture where it has been left unglazed. The ornament, which comprises various bands of conventional "diaper" patterns, or flowers, on the neck and base, together with figures of men and animals on the

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body of the vase, is strongly and boldly executed, a strong raised line silhouetting the figures and ornament. The colour scheme is of great richness and depth of tone, as the colours, with the exception of the white, are true coloured glazes, though we generally find only three of them on any one piece, viz. an ochreous yellow, verging sometimes on amber and always thinly applied; a rich, bright turquoise blue or bluish green obtained from copper oxide; and an amethystine purple obtained from oxide of manganese; in addition to a general ground colour of dark, opaque cobalt blue.

To judge by the specimens now in Europe, with their coarse paste lacking in whiteness, the massive heaviness of their contours and a decoration entirely carried out in coloured glazes, their kinship to the earliest porcelains which we have already described is quite apparent. They differ, in certain important respects, from the porcelains described in the previous section, for the constant use of turquoise and purple glazes in their colour schemes prove that these particular examples of Ming porcelains were "biscuited" before the coloured glazes were applied. Such glazes—similar in composition to the brilliant alkaline glazes of Persian and Turkish faïence—must of necessity have been fired at a considerably lower temperature than would be needed to produce the porcelain itself.[1] In this use of alkaline glazes we probably get another hint at the close intercourse, maintained through so many centuries, between the Chinese and the Persian potters.

Another bold and vigorous style of decoration, probably

[1] The temperature needed to "biscuit" the porcelain was about 1,300 to 1,400 degrees Centigrade, while the firing temperature of these coloured glazes is only about 1,050 degrees. Above this temperature the oxides of copper and manganese begin to volatilize and disappear.

CHINESE: MING

Plaque mounted as a Screen. Figures in high relief on turquoise ground
Plaque without stand 11½ in. × 11½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum (Loan Court): Benson Collection.

originating at the factory at Tz'ŭ Chou, to which we find no parallel in the work of any other race of potters at such an early date, takes the form of large and broadly designed bowl-shaped jars or vases, made in a coarse strong greyish white porcelain almost hidden by a thick brownish black glaze, which is incised with clean cut lines so as to suggest a covering of large leaves encircling the jar. Perhaps, the choicest examples are those in which the glaze is a pure glossy black.

These glazes also possess great technical interest, for their appearance and the way in which they lie on the porcelain prove that they were in the nature of "slip-glazes," i.e. glazes in which some clayey ingredient has been mixed with the glaze, either accidentally as a part of the earthy minerals used to make the strong dark colours, or definitely to give "body" to the coloured glazes, so that they would stand up in slight relief. Certainly the slightly convex surface of the glaze adds greatly to the richness of the effect, however it may have been obtained.

In striking contrast, a frankly naturalistic style of decoration is displayed in a favourite group of tallish, slender vases, bearing modelled flowers—asters, peonies, etc.—in high relief on the sides of the vases, or boldly projected so as to form ears or handles at the neck. Such vases are often very beautiful in colour, for the bright limpid alkaline glazes, purple, white and green, frequently run and mingle together in indescribable fashion, producing a variegated colour-effect which may be splendid, though it is sometimes quite the reverse. Highly as such pieces are prized, they wear an air of frivolity by the side of their grave compeers.

Further emphatic proof of the great technical skill

possessed by the potters of this period is shown in the famous thin slabs or rectangular plaques of porcelain, measuring from one to two feet on the side, which bear high-relief ornament, often on both sides, of men and horses travelling over bridged rivers or by rocky paths in a mountainous landscape. These slabs are mounted in elaborately carved blackwood stands which bear inlays of mother-of-pearl, carved translucent jade, or Canton enamels, and they display to us choice examples of the most sumptuous furniture that was used for the adornment of the writing-tables in the Imperial residences. Marvellous as an indication of the potter's skill and wonderful in their accomplishment as they must ever be considered, they rank æsthetically far below much simpler things that were easily within the potter's reach.

Another favourite colour scheme of great richness and striking beauty, which was used by all Oriental potters, whether Chinese, Persian or Japanese, and which seems to have originated long before this time, though it was brought into the most extensive use under the early Ming emperors, displays the application of a bright transparent turquoise glaze (which may be either of a pure blue, or a greenish blue tint) over rich, closely intertwined, floral patterns painted in underglaze black. In some examples the black pigment retains the sharp crispness of touch with which it was applied, but in other instances the colour has softened and flowed at the edges of the strokes so that the lines fade away by almost imperceptible gradations. Analogous wares, made at the same period in all the three countries, bear a bright transparent full green glaze, which is particularly effective on a modelled surface as it softly emphasizes the most delicate tooling.

CHINESE: WHITE PORCELAIN (*Blanc de Chine*)

Kuan-ti, God of War.
Signed Ho Chao-tsung.
Made at Têhua (17th Century)
Height 11¾ in., width 6½ in.

Tea-pot.
Têhua; reign of K'ang-Hsi
Height 6¼ in., diameter 3⅝ in.

Vase. Made at Ching-tê Chên (18th Century)
Height 9⅛ in., diameter 5⅛ in.

Salting Bequest, Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI WHITE PORCELAIN

Vase. Lizard in relief on neck. Tripod stand of white porcelain
Height 10⅛ in., diameter 4¾ in.

Vase. Incised peony pattern on sunk panel
Height 16⅜ in., width 7 in.

Wine-pot. Dragon handle (Têhua)
Height 6 in., width 5½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Two famous green enamel-colours, which are highly prized both when they occur on single-coloured pieces or are used as the ground colour of an important group of painted vases, are distinguished as "cucumber green" and "apple green." Many shades of green are called by these names, and an examination of choice examples shows that the effects were obtained by different combinations of glaze and underglaze. In some instances a greenish turquoise glaze has been superposed over a thin wash of antimony-yellow pigment on the fine white porcelain, the glaze of which is usually boldly crackled, and according to the tone of colour produced the glaze will be described as apple green or cucumber green. Another variety of apple-green glaze has a smooth dull surface, which is almost of egg-shell texture, and if a writer may express a personal preference it would be for such pieces as these, with their velvety sheen. In the Salting Bequest, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, there are some of the most choice examples of these glazes in all their varieties, though these specimens are of later date.

Sculpture and modelling played an important part in the work of the Ming potters, who followed boldly, along this path also, in the footsteps of their predecessors of Han and T'ang times. Once again we may stand amazed at the vigour and versatility of a race which produced, with equal mastery, small figures which display the most intimate, affectionate tenderness in every line and contour, and imposing, almost life-sized figures which compare not unfavourably with the sculptured marble masterpieces of the best Greek periods. Remembering, too, the great technical difficulties involved in firing at high temperatures that were triumphantly surmounted in the manufacture

of these glorious works, our wonder and admiration are profoundly stirred in presence of such masterpieces.

First, for their delicate and exquisite beauty, we may consider the examples, often quite small and generally of modest size, fashioned in pure white or creamy porcelain, which is frequently left in the " biscuit " state, though it is usually clothed with a rich white glaze, which is soft and tender both to the eye and to the touch. Such porcelains, generally known among connoisseurs as *blancs de Chine*, have ranked among the choicest treasures of European collectors for many centuries and have been widely imitated wherever porcelain has been made. One is apt to think of Chinese figures as embodying ideals of strength and virility—even of the grotesque or the terrible—but in these white figures of " Kuan-Yin " we find the most gracious and loving tenderness such as is only associated with happy motherhood. Naturally, Europeans recognized the human symbolism, beyond all differences of race or creed, and bestowed on them the appellation, " The Chinese Madonna."

The most famous centre of manufacture for this important group of porcelains was at Têhua, in Fuchien province, as we have already said, for a factory had been in active operation there from the earlier years of the Ming dynasty, and, with varying fortunes, has continued the manufacture of its white porcelains to our own times. It may be doubted if any centre of porcelain-making in China, always excepting Ching-tê Chên which is paramount beyond comparison, has exercised greater influence on the works of other potters the world over than this centre at Têhua. The quality of its white porcelain is so appealing, with its alluring yet simple purity which demands no

CHINESE: TÊHUA

Figure of Kuan-Yin. Signed Ho Chao-tsung

Height 18¾ in., width of base 6 in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

adventitious aid from the painter's palette to enhance its beauty, that all other makers of porcelain have succumbed to its attractions and have produced modelled pieces of their own, in rivalry or in frank imitation. The lover of porcelain figures will scarce need to be reminded of the charming white "figurines" which came in such abundance from the French factories of the eighteenth century—particularly from the factory at St. Cloud—but every porcelain factory of Europe sent forth "white" figures or groups in abundance, all clearly proclaiming their affiliation to these porcelains of Fuchien.

The white porcelains made at Ching-tê Chên, as we should expect, comprise examples displaying every possible tone of white, from a harsh bluish white to soft rich creamy tones, very similar to those of the Fuchien pieces. Delicate bowls and saucers with incised patterns—frequently with the dragon and wave *motifs*—cups, often of considerable height and elaborately modelled, either with fungus or bamboo patterns in high or low relief, or with figures of deities, sages or emperors, are to be met with in abundance in all the famous collections, though one ought to mention particularly the display of choice examples in the Musée Guimet in Paris, in the Franks Collection in the British Museum, and in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The same spirit of fear and wonder, almost like a child's visions of monsters, that led to the constant use of dragon forms in Chinese art, produced many other fabulous creatures, among which the carved or modelled grotesques, known as "kylins," are the boldest and most striking. They have been likened to lions and great dogs, and both these creatures doubtless gave hints of form and savagery that stimulated

the artist's imagination; but many of them appear to have been suggested by the rhinoceros, which was a common animal in the swamps and rivers of southern China and of Siam. Apparently, the modellers no longer aimed at life-like representations of animals in action, and they seem to have produced with great satisfaction a group of highly conventionalized beasts, fashioned more or less to convey the phantasies of an artistic conception. From early Ming times to at least the end of the eighteenth century we have an unfailing supply of these wonder beasts, generally enriched with splendid transparent turquoise or purple glazes, used either alone or in combination, while other examples display rich yellow and amber glazes. Whatever the colour scheme, the modelled forms seem expressly designed to enhance its fullest richness or purity, as they cause the glazes to lie in every gradation of thickness from the merest film that just tinges the white porcelain, to deep shimmering pools that seem unfathomable.

Striking use is also made of the rich amber or yellow glazes in colouring the robes of figures of gods or priests, whether as a hint of some lingering influences of the once widespread sun worship or other ancient cult is possible but uncertain. One may be permitted to think that the various gorgeous colour schemes were not always as significant of belief or ritual as some writers claim. The artist of every race has been quick to claim for himself greater freedom of æsthetic enjoyment than the strict observance of cultural ritual would allow.

Considering that to the vast majority of Europeans the mention of Chinese porcelain conjures up visions of blue and white painted pieces only, and the vast predominance of examples in this style of decoration in all

CHINESE: MING

Covered Box in turquoise and underglaze blue

Height 5⅞ in., diameter 10⅛ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

but distinctly specialized collections, it may seem matter for surprise that we have made no specific mention before this of the fine white porcelains painted only in shades of blue. To all but the student and the expert collector of the earlier porcelains this particular species is so emphatically what is understood by the phrase "Chinese porcelain," that to the ordinary reader it may cause something like a shock to be told that painting in underglaze blue alone was seldom used in China before the early years of the fifteenth century. When we recall, too, the prevalent and widespread use of rich and brilliant underglaze blues in the decorative schemes of the Persian and Syrian potters of western Asia for centuries before this time, we cannot but wonder that Chinese conservatism and respect for tradition should have interposed such a long delay in the introduction of the beautiful colour that was in later centuries considered worthy of the highest esteem and the most extensive use.

We have to remember, however, that such cobaltiferous minerals as are to be found in China are so earthy and impure that they must undergo a lengthy and troublesome process of refining and purification before they can be of much use as pigments for delicate painting on porcelain. Much may, therefore, be urged in favour of the view that the Chinese not only adopted the idea of painting in underglaze blue from the Persians but drew their supplies of the finest blue pigment from the same source. Certainly, Chinese connoisseurs esteem most highly, among all their productions in this class, the blue and white porcelains made during the reigns of Hsüan-tê (1426–35) and of Ch'êng-hua (1465–87), while they rank as third in quality the blue and white of Yung-lo (1403–24). The pigment

which was used during these three reigns is always spoken of by the Chinese writers as "Mohammedan blue," so that it was evidently obtained from some Mohammedan country, either as tribute or by barter. In my opinion, it was most probably brought from a district of the country that is now known as Baluchistan, where scattered deposits of the purest form of cobalt ore have been found and worked for centuries. This mineral, known as "cobalt bloom," is a compound of cobalt and arsenic and could be used directly, after a simple process of grinding and washing, without all the troublesome, lengthy and costly roasting and refining needed to obtain a sufficiently pure pigment from the minerals found in China. We certainly find that when the supply of this precious blue was cut off, as happened during the later reigns of the fifteenth century, and the Chinese were again compelled to use their native materials, the quality of the blue pigment shows immediate deterioration for, instead of the pure and brilliant tints, whether dark or light in tone, the painted porcelain colour became so much greyer and less transparent and full that it appears comparatively dull, muddy and heavy. Chinese writers state, that, sometime in the reign of Chêng-tê (1506–21), the governor of the province of Yunnan, in southern China, through whom the trade appears to have been conducted, secured further supplies of the precious Mohammedan blue for twice its weight in gold, and at this exorbitant price it remained available to about the middle of the sixteenth century, when, for some unknown reason, the supply finally ceased and the Chinese potters were once more compelled to employ the duller pigment prepared from their native ores. This explanatory digression may be forgiven because it shows so clearly

CHINESE

White Baluster Vase. Modelled decoration in low relief, in céladon, blue and copper red
Height 17½ in., diameter 6¾ in.

Powder-blue Vase. Modelled decoration in low relief, in céladon and underglaze red
Height 17½ in., diameter 7 in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

what pains the Chinese were prepared to take to obtain the finest known materials for the use of their artists and craftsmen.

No verbal description can convey a full sense of the tender richness and glowing splendour of this peerless painted blue as it appears on the refined fifteenth-century Chinese porcelain. In my opinion, what is always admirable in the highest degree is the harmonious balance between the painted blue and the tone of the superposed glaze; another clear demonstration of the artistic instinct shown by the Chinese even when they adopt foreign materials or ideas.

A skilful and charming application of the fine blue colour which made its appearance at this time, though it was extensively used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is known as "powder blue" or "blown blue," for the finely ground cobalt pigment was blown on the porcelain by the workman projecting a shower of tiny drops by blowing through a bamboo tube over one end of which a piece of fine muslin was stretched. A beautiful, mottled ground was thus produced, which could be made to fade away gradually or could be sharply ended by a shaped mask of thin paper.

Contemporaneously with this extended use of underglaze blue and frequently, though by no means exclusively, used along with it on the same piece of painted porcelain, we find an underglaze red pigment prepared from copper —such a pigment being one of the mid-nineteenth century discoveries of the European potter. So beautiful and rich is this precious colour, like drops of freshly drawn blood, yet so difficult to produce in perfection on the painted porcelain, that Chinese dealers, anxious to enhance its

value in European eyes, invented the legend that it was made from powdered rubies. We may smile at the conceit, knowing its absurdity, though the story doubtless served the dealer admirably, for, however rich and beautiful a colour or an effect may be in itself, the ignorant are always duly impressed when they are told that gold or rubies, or other costly things, are used in the production of a glaze or a colour.

The underglaze red, as we have just said, is prepared from copper and has close chemical affinities to the colour which produces the blood-red glazes. It may be no more than a coincidence but the underglaze red was first extensively used at a time when the blood-red and other rich glazes do not appear to have been in favour, and when, apparently, the Court prescribed a style of porcelain decoration in which fine and precise painting or drawing was the admired feature. Besides its use in association with underglaze blue as a painted colour, to which we will return in a moment, the magnificent underglaze red is especially mentioned in the reign of Hsüan-tê (1426–35), when it was used as a ground colour for enriching the outsides of small objects, especially bowls and cups. But the colour was so highly prized for its soft and luscious quality that many special objects were made in shapes such as would display these qualities to the full and would permit the application of other colours which served as a foil to its charms. We frequently read of small objects, made for the writing-table of the scholar and used to contain water for dropping on to the ink palette, shaped like a persimmon fruit, with an attached twig and a few leaves forming the handle ; in such specimens the fruit is in bright underglaze red, the leaves and attached

CHINESE : MING

Vase with Cover

Height with stand and cover 18¼ in., diameter 14 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum, Loan Court. By permission of Harvey Hadden, Esq.

stalk being coloured green and brown, respectively, in the ordinary coloured glazes. The album of the Chinese collector and scholar, H'siang-Yuan-p'ien, who flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century, which has been presented to us with an English translation by the pious zeal of Dr. S. W. Bushell,[1] contains a number of coloured drawings of choice and dainty examples on which this colour appears. The examples lose nothing by the Chinese description, which reads: "Three red fishes on a white ground, pure as driven snow, the fish boldly outlined and red as fresh blood, all with colour so brilliant as to dazzle the eye." He further says that such pieces were exceedingly rare, and in referring to another style of decoration in which three pairs of peaches are painted in underglaze red on a white ground, he says, "only two or three are known to exist within the Four Seas," i.e. within the Chinese Empire. Such specimens as these can never have been plentiful, but if they were rare, as this collector says, in the sixteenth century, there are still a few specimens, which seem to be quite authentic, in the great European and American collections of the present day.

In marked contrast to these small, finely wrought and precious examples there are a number of tall, high-shouldered baluster-shaped vases of this period on which we find incised dragon patterns, covered with an underglaze copper red, though in the majority of them the colour is imperfectly developed as it usually exhibits dark "smoky" patches and other signs of imperfect firing, for the glaze is often dry looking and full of bubbles, a sure mark of inferiority.

[1] Bushell, S. W., *Porcelain of Different Dynasties.* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908.

There can be little doubt that the production of the copper-red glazes and the underglaze red fell into comparative disuse in the closing years of the Ming dynasty, and the potters at the Imperial factory appear to have experienced much trouble and difficulty in producing the underglaze red in a really fine quality. So far as we can understand the Chinese notes on this subject there was some difficulty or other in procuring the necessary minerals for compounding the colour or the clays deemed essential in the manufacture of the special ware on which the colour was produced to the greatest advantage. Neither of these explanations seems entirely satisfactory, but, whatever the true reasons may have been, it is obvious that difficulties arose which were unsurmountable at the time as, in the 26th year of the reign of Chia Ching (about 1548), Hsü Chên, of the Imperial Censors Office, presented a memorial to the throne praying that the iron red (overglaze) might be employed instead. A memorial of similar tenor was forwarded to the Court of the next emperor, Lung Ch'ing (1567–72), when the excessive demands made by the Court for porcelains caused Hsü Ch'ih, president of the Board of Censors, to present another petition of protest. In this protest it is stated that the secret of the copper-red colour had been lost and the petition asks, among other things, that the simpler and more manageable iron red (*fan hung*) might be used in its place. Apparently to support this request, there is the further statement that Ching-tê Chên had been recently devastated by fire and flood, so that many of the workmen had fled from the district. We do not know what effect was given to this memorial at the time but it does appear that a similar protest, made in the succeeding reign (Wan-Li), led to a considerable

reduction in the demands made by the Court, for a time at all events. In any case the sensual and pleasure-loving Lung Ch'ing does not appear, from what we know of his character, to have exercised any marked influence on the porcelains made during his reign and they are only to be distinguished from the examples of the reign of his successor, Wan-Li, by the reign mark when it occurs, usually, as a sunk medallion with the six characters finely painted in underglaze blue on an, otherwise, unglazed base. Mr. Hobson has described two covered boxes of the Imperial blue and white porcelains of Lung Ch'ing, which may be seen in the British Museum ; [1] but such marked examples as these are rare.

Wan-Li (1573 – 1619). This long reign, when the Chinese throne was occupied by the last able ruler of the Ming dynasty, was a period of notable activity for its profuse production of porcelains of many kinds, for the whole art of porcelain manufacture and decoration was thrown into the melting-pot, until, after an interval, the truly Imperial styles of the K'ang-Hsi period emerged. Under Wan-Li the decoration in underglaze blue falls to a much lower level, generally, in the quality of the pigment, the nature of the porcelain, and the hasty and, frequently, careless style of the brushwork. The Imperial lists of porcelains requisitioned from the factory at Ching-tê Chên show that decorations in blue and white predominated in the pieces made for the Court. But, in addition, there was a large output of porcelains with this style of decoration, expressly made and painted in shapes and styles suited

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, loc. cit., Vol. II., p. 57. These particular specimens are of some importance as documents by means of which other specimens made in this reign may yet be identified.

to the tastes of Indian and Persian princes, as well as for export to Europe which at this time, through the new-born activities of its "India" Companies, began to make its demands known both in China and Japan. Naturally, in the attempt to satisfy requirements which were so varied, and tastes which differed, widely, from those of the Chinese, there is much variation in material and decoration in these "export" porcelains, and this great increase in production, and possibly the Chinese contempt for the tastes of Western peoples, caused a resort to materials and workmanship which would never have been tolerated had the porcelains been intended for home consumption. Wherever an attempt is made to manufacture, at one and the same time, porcelains of fine finish and decoration and inferior porcelains as well, the influence of the hastily finished, inferior production is inevitably reflected on the entire output, and this seems to have occurred in China at this juncture.

It has been stated, by Chinese writers on the subject, that the supply of the precious Mohammedan blue was entirely cut off, some time during the reign of Wan-Li. Probably, however, there were sufficient supplies already in China which permitted the fine colour to be used for the greater part of the reign, as there are many dated examples in Europe which show that it was used, at least, during a part of the time. Mr. Hobson has noted and described a few typical examples of the finer colour and decoration which are now in the British Museum, some painted in a clear, brilliant blue, and others with blue of a deeper shade, something like the colour of indigo, all bearing the Wan-Li mark.[1] One of the earliest of these,

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., pp. 66, 67.

CHINESE: WAN-LI

Blue and White Jar

Height 14¾ in., diameter 13 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

if indeed it is not a stray specimen from an earlier reign, is a bowl, mounted with a silver-gilt foot and winged caryatid handles. This piece is made in fine, white porcelain with a thick, faintly bluish tinted glaze and is painted with a blue pigment which develops a darkish, indigo-like tint. The style of the European mount is referable to about 1580, so that the specimen is well dated.

The finer varieties of the blue and white porcelains, made for export to India, Persia or Europe, which are clearly referable to the time of Wan-Li or his immediate predecessors, have been reinstated into favour by modern European collectors, who admire, particularly, the pale, silvery tones of the painted blue, and, what is by no means so admirable, the modelled forms and crinkled lips and borders which Mr. F. Perzynski, in an article in the *Burlington Magazine* of October, 1910, accurately describes in these words: "The artists of this group have used thin brittle material more like flexible metal than porcelain." A more severe condemnation of this particular expression of the tastes of the period could hardly have been penned.

These Chinese export porcelains are usually met with nowadays in the form of bowls, dishes and spouted bottles or ewers with crinkled rims, and they are well represented in the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as in every continental collection of the porcelains of this period, for in addition to those which came to Europe when they were made, large quantities have since been brought here from Persia, India and other eastern countries. As we should expect, they are of extremely varied quality, in material, colour and painting. To consider the more choice examples first: the dish borders and the exteriors

of the bowls, etc., are divided into radiating compartments, sometimes by raised ribs, the panels displaying painted figures or groups, conventional plants or flowers, symbols or diapers, while the ribs or divisions are painted with tasselled cords with pendent jewels. The spaces are filled, or often overcrowded, with brocade diapers with a swastika fret, hexagonal diapers, or "matting" patterns. In the great museums and collections we now possess many choice examples of this group of dishes, bowls, and ewers, which are noteworthy and often excellent both in design and painting as well as in colour quality.

In strongly marked contrast are the large, deep dishes, from 14 to 18 inches across, which were evidently made in great quantities for the Persian, Indian and other export markets, as thousands of them are still in existence. In these big dishes the rims have a moulded edge and are, usually, roughly and hastily decorated with brocade diapers or "matting" patterns. The centre of the dish displays what might be taken for the work of a Persian pot-painter, bearing hastily but cleverly painted representations of subjects of the chase, such as deer reclining or running on the edge of a forest, birds in a marsh, with a hovering falcon, and such like subjects painted, after the Persian style, by ordinary Chinese decorators. Generally, the ware is of inferior quality both in material and decoration; the underglaze blue pigment is usually heavy and defective, for its prevalent tone is a dark and opaque indigo, with much "milkiness" and patches of rusty-looking scum disfiguring the surface of the colour. Great quantities of these debased productions have found their way to Europe, and one could collect a dozen any day without much trouble, though they often command prices

which bear no relation to their quality, merely because they are, undoubtedly, specimens of the "Ming" blue and white.

Examples which produce a much more favourable impression of the use of painted underglaze blue at this period are found among the porcelains in which modelling and carving are the prominent feature of the enrichment, and the blue is used to relieve or heighten the effect. The Chinese name for the pierced work is "*ling lung*," while the style in which the applied, modelled reliefs are used is known as "*ting chuang*" or "*tui hua*," and there are examples of a third composite class in which the "piercing" and "modelled reliefs" are combined, with or without the addition of painted underglaze blue. There are many small and dainty bowls, usually about 3 to 4 inches across the mouth and from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, with skilfully pierced fret-work patterns, or with applied figures, modelled in the round and stuck on, so that they present a somewhat comical appearance when they are seen in profile. Examples have been figured and described from the Pierpont Morgan Collection, from the Nightingale Collection and from the Grandidier Collection in the Louvre, from which a splendid typical specimen of the style is reproduced by Mr. Hobson.[1] After they had been fired these pieces received additional colouring in the shape of a red, unfired pigment on which gold-leaf or oil gilding was applied, but these have, usually, been cleaned away by this time. We are able to judge of their original appearance perfectly, as several well-known Dutch pictures of the mid-seventeenth century happen to contain among their carefully painted details representations of

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., Fig. 3, Plate 78.

these figures, which at that time displayed both colours and gilding.

The small bowls, usually only some $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 inches across the lip and from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, display the skilful "piercing" already mentioned, and the small, attached figures, frequently with underglaze blue emphasizing the medallions or painted as a simple running border just below the everted lip or as a band above the foot. The little pierced medallions display the characters *fu*, *shou*, *k'ang*, *ning* (happiness, longevity, peace, tranquillity), and under the base are the six characters of the Wan-Li mark. Naturally, the reliefs on these medallions are very small, but they are skilfully modelled and they include human and animal figures, or birds and flowers.

An allied style of decoration shows the fretwork deeply cut into but not piercing the body, and the sunk parts of the design are usually devoid of glaze. It was probably found that the deep incisions took the glaze very unevenly, and the simplest way of securing uniformity was to clean out the lines with a pointed bit of stick, before firing, so that the glaze rests only on the spaces between the sunk lines. On such pieces the blue and white medallions and the painted borders under the rim and above the base also occur.

Similar delicate and dexterous perforated work is found in the rice-grain patterns and the method probably reached its culminating point in the pierced egg-shell lanterns of the eighteenth century; while it was extensively used in the decoration of the Japanese "Hirado" porcelains, and it has been followed at Sèvres, at some of the modern Paris factories and especially at Worcester, where numerous fine open-work vases have been made, with a skill

CHINESE

Late Ming Vase
Height 9¼ in., width 4⅞ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Late Ming Vase.
Period of K'ang-Hsi
Height 6¾ in., diameter 8 in.
Florence Bequest.

and precision which leave nothing to be desired, during the last sixty years.

Underglaze red, used either alone or in conjunction with underglaze blue, is found on a considerable number of examples of the late Ming porcelains, though Chinese writers and collectors seem to have considered it inferior in quality to the famous reds of the immediately preceding reigns. In spite of this the precious colour must have been freely used from about the time of Hsüan-tê (1426–35), as, in the *Po wu yao lan*, which gives the fullest account of the porcelains of this reign, there is a passage, freely rendered by Mr. Hobson,[1] as follows: "Among the wares of the Hsüan-tê period there are stem cups decorated with red fish. For these they use a powder made of red precious stones from the West to paint the fish forms, and from the body there rose up in relief in the firing the precious brilliance of the fresh red ravishing the eye." This reign only covered the short period of some ten years, and specimens of this kind are so rare that it is doubtful if any authentic specimens exist in Europe to-day; but the colour was so freely and splendidly produced in later times, especially during the reign of K'ang-Hsi, that we have no difficulty in visualizing the red of such glowing depth and purity as called forth unstinted praise from those who were perfectly acquainted with its qualities. Either accidentally or by skilful management, the colour appeared in various tones which have been spoken of as "fresh red" (*hsien hung*), "ruby red" (*pao shih hung*) and "red as the sun," which has been likened to cinnabar. If we assume, as I think we are fully entitled to do, that these copper-red glazes and the underglaze red were of great excellence,

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., pp. 9–11.

we know enough of their character and appearance to be able to visualize them reasonably well.

The céladon glazes were to some extent replaced by the apple green and similar effects, where a crackled greyish white glaze was coated with a bright, soft-toned green enamel-colour, which, when it was washed over the reddish biscuit of the foot, produced a brown band at the base of the piece. In later days, as in the imitative porcelains of the eighteenth century, this practice was extensively followed and the foot-rims of the crackled porcelains of various colours were "dressed" with a coating of dark brown clay to reproduce the characteristic "iron foot" of the precious examples of Sung or early Ming manufacture. Nowadays, choice specimens of the "apple green" and related monochromes of the sixteenth century are almost as highly prized as the earlier porcelains which they imitated (at a distance), and in beauty of tone and texture they need fear no comparison, though they lack the subtle mystery of the true céladons which is never to be captured by an overglaze effect, however beautiful or delicate that may be in itself.

We find, in addition, a range of coloured glazes of soft bright tints and texture which had to be fired at a lower temperature than the white, ruby red or other glazes, and these are generally known by the French title for such a group, *couleurs de demi-grand feu.* Such colours are quite incapable of supporting the temperature required to vitrify the porcelain, so pieces on which they were used had, perforce, to be fired in those parts of the furnace where a more moderate temperature was attained, the colours being applied on "biscuit" porcelain. Those which were extensively used are turquoise of various shades (*ts'ui sê*)

CHINESE (late 17th or 18th Century)

Bottle, with turquoise glaze
Height with stand 11½ in., diameter 8 in.

Vase, with Flambé or "Transmutation" glaze
Height with stand 9⅛ in., diameter 6⅓ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

made from a preparation of old copper and saltpetre with powdered quartz ; bright green (*chin lü*) made from copper oxide with a flux of powdered quartz and red or white lead and purple (*tzŭ sê*), which was made by mixing the cobaltiferous manganese ore with the same flux. These turquoise, bright green and rich purple glazes, were not only used in the decoration of vases of various shapes and sizes, but they are strikingly displayed on the large covered jars, vases and garden seats which present a superb appearance, having their designs emphasized by raised lines, or by carving or piercing, and the entire execution marked by great boldness and freedom. Such examples of sixteenth century manufacture serve to mark the use of one more decorative style which, originating centuries earlier than this, was continued into the eighteenth century.

Another palette of colours, displaying the famous three-colour (*san ts'ai*) scheme of green, yellow and purple (aubergine), is frequently described as consisting of coloured glazes, but in reality the porcelain pigments used were thickly applied enamels compounded with a lead flux. They were used in several different ways, for we can identify them in various plain monochrome effects, sometimes enriched by designs skilfully tooled or incised in the paste, or in various mottlings or juxtapositions of various colours, adroitly blending over the lines of a design which was either incised in the clay or painted on the biscuit in raised lines.

Imperial yellow as a colour, apart altogether from its rank as a porcelain glaze or enamel, has long been of considerable symbolic and ritualistic significance in China. Among the courtly, religious ceremonials for which it was brought into special prominence is one, connected with

the banquet furnished for the spirits of his ancestors, given by the Emperor in the famous Ancestral Temple in the Prohibited City at Peking. The reigning Emperor proceeded in great state to this temple, four times a year, to officiate as Chief Priest and to preside over the ensuing banquet prepared for the shades of the departed.[1] All the utensils needed for this pious observance were of special distinction, and we learn that the vessels used at the Ancestral Temple are enamelled in yellow, the Imperial colour, as also are the porcelain vessels used for the service of the Altar of Earth in Peking, and likewise those which were used by the Emperor and Empress in their worship of the patron god of agriculture and the goddess of silk at their respective temples.

Yellow glazes of various tones are, of course, known from an early period of Chinese ceramic history, but the choice yellow glazes referred to would appear to have come into special prominence during the reign of the early Ming emperors and, possibly, they reached perfection in Chinese eyes during the reign of Hung Chih (1488–1505), for light yellow porcelain glazes are said to have been specially prized at this period. A number of exquisite examples of this renowned yellow glaze are illustrated in the "Album of H'siang," and one of them, a slender, melon-shaped wine-pot, has been so often reproduced that it seems to have been accepted as the standard of reference by all English and American writers. Connoisseurs, native and foreign alike, lavish their encomiums on the delicate, sub-translucent glaze which is always spoken of as "waxen"

[1] See S. W. Bushell, *Oriental Ceramic Art*, p. 490 *et seq.*, for an account of this interesting ceremonial, and of the ritualistic significance of the various colours used on those occasions.

or "shell-like," and it appears to have been produced sparingly to the close of the Ming period.

One of the most important colours which was extensively used on the late Ming porcelains is the iron red (*fan hung*), obtained by lightly and carefully roasting at a dull red heat clean crystals of green vitriol (sulphate of iron). This is a delicate process which needs great care if the oxide of iron is to be left a bright red tone when the sulphuric acid and water have all been expelled. When prepared to perfection it gives a beautiful coral-red colour, but it was often roasted too little or too much, when it is either orange-coloured or a dull brick red. When it is thinly applied it is exceedingly beautiful and lustrous, but it is often thickly applied so as to present a "piled-up" appearance and feel. On the late Ming examples it has usually become highly lustrous or even iridescent from the surface decay of the lead flux—an effect which distinctly adds to its beauty. The potters of the eighteenth century also used this colour extensively and in a variety of ways, so that it must be regarded as one of the most important colours of the Chinese decorator, while in Japan it has, if anything, been even more extensively used still in the old Kutani (*Ko-kutani*) decoration and the later schemes derived from that.

The various shades of green enamels—one of which, a very blue green, is thought to be a distinctively Ming colour—were obtained from copper oxide; a yellow, or yellowish orange which is a lead and antimony compound and is apt to be opaque, and a bright transparent aubergine which varies in tint between purple and brown as such manganese colours are apt to do, according to the exact firing temperature and the proportion of lead with which

they are fluxed. Another brown-black colour obtained from manganese was used for fine outlines, but it is most significantly used in broad washes which when coated with the rich, transparent green forms the green-black colour which is seen in its utmost splendour as the ground of the famous *famille noire* examples of the reign of K'ang-Hsi, of the next dynasty. There are, however, a few small vases, bowls and dishes of Ming manufacture on which the black ground was produced with great perfection, and these are of extreme interest as denoting the first appearance of this strong and dignified style of decoration.

CHAPTER II

CHINESE PORCELAIN—(*continued*)

THE PORCELAINS OF K'ANG-HSI, YUNG-CHÊNG AND CH'IEN-LUNG

THE final culminating period of the history of Chinese porcelain extends approximately from the middle of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century, when the Imperial throne was occupied successively by the famous emperor K'ang-Hsi (1662–1722), a virile, masterful ruler of the State as well as a noble patron of learning and the arts; his son, Yung-Chêng (1723–35), a fastidious and learned collector of examples of ancient art, for which he ransacked the treasures of the land, and his grandson, Ch'ien-Lung (1736–95), a renowned calligraphist and poet.

All three of these sovereigns were keenly interested in the manufacture of porcelain, as well as in its history, and there is abundant evidence that it was this active Imperial patronage which was chiefly responsible for the vigorous success which marked the work of the Imperial factory at Ching-tê Chên during their reigns, when porcelain treasures, in styles both new and old, came forth in such abundance as if the art were, indeed, in its very prime. Nothing was too bold to attempt, for thousands of great vases remain to us which demonstrate the powers displayed in every process of manufacture and decoration, while small and delicate objects were wrought and finished as if they had been precious jewels. The complete mastery

of materials and processes is also strikingly manifest in the subsidiary porcelains among which we have countless specimens which imitate, with almost deceptive skill, the appearance or texture of wood, leather, bronze, coral, jade, agate and other natural or artificial substances. In short, the arts of porcelain had been carried to such perfection that as a relief from their more serious labours the potters of this era sometimes played with their materials in the most whimsical fashion, as a child plays with a lump of modelling-clay, reshaping it anew to the heart's desire with every passing mood or fancy.

The white porcelains made during the reign of K'ang-Hsi are of rare distinction as, in addition to a profusion of wine-pots and cups—often of considerable height and, generally, richly carved—they include a considerable number of carved or modelled figures of moderate size that display all the dignity and severe simplicity of the noblest sculpture. One such masterpiece, of haunting power, is a figure of "Kuan-Ti," the God of War, which belongs to Mr. Eumorfopoulos; but every fine collection of the classic Chinese porcelains contains specimens of such figures, and the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum provides a ready means of reference to choice examples of the wine-pots and cups as well as to notable examples of the figures, while excellent specimens are, of course, to be found in the collections in the British Museum.

Têhua, in Fuchien, so long famed for its white porcelains, was still in full activity, but large quantities of white wares were made at Ching-tê Chên, especially for the use of the Court and the furnishing of the royal residences, for which purposes white porcelain was in especial demand, and these

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSÍ

Plate, with figures. *Famille verte* colouring.
Diameter 8⅛ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Bowl, with yellow ground with green and aubergine dragon
Height 2¾ in., diameter 5⅞ in.

Blue and White Plate, with pierced border
Diameter 8½ in.

display every tone and shade of white from that of frozen snow, through delicate creamy tints to a full ivory tone of rich and satisfying beauty. In many respects the white porcelains of these three reigns mark the culminating point of pure porcelain as a decorative material—which almost seems to disdain the accessory arts of the painter and enameller as it needs no adventitious aid of theirs to display the full perfection of its charms.

The beautiful céladon glazes were once more restored to high favour throughout the whole of this period, though, as they reached the acme of technical perfection, they lost some of the charm of that mysterious depth shown by their prototypes of Sung and early Ming times. We no longer feel the allurement of a process passing through the first stages of discovery and before the morning freshness has vanished. On the contrary, these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century céladons triumphantly demonstrate that the potter had, by this time, attained full control of his resources, for they display an assured mastery of the necessary materials and the delicate firing processes which leaves the fine examples so perfect that they convey no hint of any difficulty left unsolved.

These later céladons display delicately beautiful, refined, pale sea green tints of varying intensity on a body of fine, compact, white porcelain, and, unless they belong to that class of pieces specially made to be passed off for old wares, they are, on the whole, thinner and lighter than the Sung and Ming céladons, both in body and in glaze quality, while unlike the earlier examples they are usually finished under the base with ordinary white glaze.

From this time to the present day, the manufacture of the various céladon porcelains has never ceased, as apart

from the fine examples which are always of interest and usually of an exceedingly refined beauty, there has been a very large output of inferior céladons coming from a number of factories in different parts of China, and this business still persists. Mr. Hobson speaks with justifiable contempt of " these execrable copies (often further decorated in underglaze blue), and invariably furnished with the *Ch'êng Hua* mark incised on a square brown panel under the base, which are to be seen in almost every pawnbroker's window."

Nevertheless, magnificent examples of the later céladons must have been made in abundance as it is easy to recall choice examples from every great European collection, and they seem to be equally well represented in the American museums and private collections. To the very end of the eighteenth century and, apparently, for a decade or two afterwards, they must have been manufactured very freely, for the export trade with Europe and the rapidly developing countries of America brought extensive demands for all the favourite types of Chinese porcelain, and of these the porcelains of the céladon group formed a notable feature.

In association with the céladons we almost invariably observe a parallel production of the various " transmutation " glazes which owe their colour—in all its shades of flashing red, streaked, veined or clouded with grey and purple—to copper in its lowest stages of oxidation. During the period under consideration, these *sang de bœuf* or *flambé* glazes also regained their full splendour and were produced in profusion, with such perfection that the best specimens vie with those of any previous age.

First, in the esteem of the majority of collectors, ranks the peerless " Lang Yao " red, the invention of which

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

Apple-green Bowl

Height 2⅜ in., diameter 5⅜ in.

Coral-red Bowl

Height 2⅝ in., diameter 5⅞ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

is attributed by Chinese writers to the famous Lang T'ing-Tso, who was governor of the province of Kiang-si in 1654, and held the post of Viceroy during the periods 1656–61 and 1665–68. The choice examples of the famous red glaze, which was named after this famous governor, present all the qualities of varied and modulated colour just described, and the finest of them are so perfect in colour, gradation and finish that they seem to defy imitation; at all events, we may safely say that only rare and exceptional examples of later manufacture approach these triumphs in the resplendent glory of their rich and palpitating colour. Such masterpieces are always well finished and perfectly true to shape, while the lip of the vase shows a line of clear white glaze immediately below the rim, from which the colour depends, like a filmy curtain, in all its splendour of broken tints in which the glowing red appears flecked with purple and, when closely examined, presents a "grained" appearance which is due to a slight flocculence of the red particles in a general ground of opalescent glaze. The red colour ends at the base, as it begins at the neck, in an even, unbroken line, while, under the base, the porcelain is usually coated with a crackled glaze, which may be of a rice grey or pale bright apple green tint.

Precious as these deep blood red examples are, there is another of the red transmutation glazes which is still more highly valued by modern collectors, especially, it would seem, in America. This is the "peach bloom" or "crushed strawberry" glaze, which can only be described in words as a tender, mottled, pinkish red, dappled with russet spots, lying, apparently, over an underlayer of a light sea green glaze, shyly revealed here and there. Chinese connoisseurs name these choice glazes "apple

red" or "haricot red," but the title "peach bloom" or "peach blow" is generally used in Europe and America. In discussing such choice and beautiful glaze effects as these it is always advisable to direct the reader's attention to a typical example in some public collection to which there is ready access and I therefore mention a small water vessel made for the writing-table of a Chinese scholar and now in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which may be accepted as a standard of comparison.[1] Various red glazes of this "peach bloom" type have been made, sparingly, even to recent times, though good examples are so scarce that we cannot regard the glaze as one of those in general use. In all probability such specimens of this glaze as are of recent manufacture are chance effects appearing occasionally only—sucessful and valuable "sports" among the general output of the *flambé* glazes.

It should be mentioned, also, that since the modern extensions of porcelain-making have taken place in Japan, this and other Chinese effects which would always command a high price abroad have been imitated with some measure of success by modern Japanese potters. With this particular glaze the modern reproducers have not been so successful as with some other effects, but it is well that collectors should now be doubly on their guard in seeking to acquire these rare pieces where prices rule high and the reward of the skilful forger is proportionately great.

Successful reproductions of these glazes have been made in France, first by Th. Deck and afterwards at Sèvres, and by Mr. Bernard Moore in this country; but these

[1] This specimen is most successfully reproduced in Mr. Hobson's *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., Plate 111.

bear clear distinguishing marks so that they cannot be confounded with the Oriental specimens.

Magnificent examples of the famous turquoise glazes are a valuable feature of the porcelains of the reigns of K'ang-Hsi, Yung-Chêng and Ch'ien-Lung, for their manufacture was continued without intermission. Considering the group as a whole it comprises a great variety of brilliant greenish blue tones from those of bright, pure, bluish tints known by the Chinese as " kingfisher colour " to the equally limpid but greenish blue shades called by them " peacock green." All these glazes are, perhaps, best known from their extensive use on the modelled animal forms, particularly on the grotesque lions or kylins in couchant attitude, with one paw resting on a perforated ball, though they were also freely used for the enrichment of a fine series of vases and bowls, which sometimes display scroll-work patterns in low relief, but which generally bear incised designs of floral scrolls or dragons disporting themselves 'midst waves and clouds, executed in the most finished tooling.

All the turquoise glazes belong to the class of " soft " glazes that must be applied to porcelain that has been " biscuited " previously, as the turquoise glazes need only a moderate heat to reach their perfect development, and also, the copper oxide to which they owe their colour would volatilize, below the full heat of the porcelain furnace, leaving only an ashen white glaze which would probably be dry and puckered. The delicate and precise firing needed for this sensitive glaze is still further shown by the thin, black, metallic-looking skin which frequently forms on sharp edges, such as the lips of bowls or the highest parts of modelled reliefs, where the glaze, running thin in

the fire, is no longer able to retain all the colouring oxide in solution.

Another important feature of these glazes is that they are always minutely "crackled" with a delicate network of fine lines producing the texture known by the Chinese as "fish roe" but called among us *truité*, from its supposed resemblance to the scales of a trout. The "crackle" undoubtedly produces a valuable texture quality in many glazes, such as these, that would otherwise be too glassy and thin-looking.

Apart from the existence of numerous examples whose craftsmanship indicates one or other of these three reigns, there is a valuable note in the list of decorations used at the Imperial factory which was drawn up by Hsieh Min, at the direction of the Emperor.[1] This list mentions turquoise (*fei ts'ui*) glazes "Copying three sorts: (1) pure turquoise, (2) blue flecked, and (3) gold flecked (*chin tien*)." The last variety has never been clearly identified, though one may hazard a guess that it was distinguished by the appearance of spots or streaks of aventurine, which would be a perfectly feasible production in conjunction with a turquoise glaze.

Extensive use was also made of several varieties of opaque turquoise glaze and overglaze, in which the tone of colour was modified and the glaze was rendered more or less opaque by the addition of oxide of tin or of the arsenic white enamel so freely used by the decorator for the enrichment of the coloured borders of the *famille rose* porcelains. In the later eighteenth century a number of large vases were decorated in a sour sort of colour scheme, that sets

[1] *Oriental Ceramic Art*, by S. W. Bushell, p. 368 *et seq.*, and *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, by R. L. Hobson, Vol. II, p. 223 *et seq.*

one's teeth on edge, in which an opaque turquoise enamel was used in conjunction with a pale lemon yellow. The interesting and much more commendable application of the opaque turquoise referred to may be seen in a number of the *famille rose* pieces—where it was used in bands or borders painted over with fine net-work patterns in black—especially in the elaborate saucer-dishes and plates or on the necks of some of the larger vases.

Two other glazes which were already in great favour under the late Ming emperors and were brought into extensive use during this period are known as "cucumber green," or by the Chinese as "cucumber-skin green" (*kua-p'i lü*), and "apple green," sometimes, and not very accurately, called "green *lang yao*." There are many examples of these strong and beautiful coloured glazes which date from at least the later reigns of the Ming dynasty, at which time the effects possibly originated.[1]

The cucumber green is a strongly crackled and rich green, in which the colour was applied as a medium to hard-fired enamel over a strongly crackled white glaze. This effect appears to have been produced in two ways: First, by superposing on a crackled white glaze a wash of an antimony-yellow underglaze pigment which was coated in turn with a greenish turquoise glaze. The piece was then re-fired at a moderate red heat, just sufficient to reduce the outer glaze to a bright, smooth surface without impairing the richness of the effect by over-firing. The apple green is somewhat similar in tone to the above, though usually the name is reserved for those examples which are of a distinctly bluish green shade. It should be noted at once that the name "apple green" is applied to two distinct effects;

[1] See p. 25.

the more common variety has the ordinary bright surface of porcelain glazes, while the other presents a dull, rich gloss, and has only the texture of vellum or of the skin of a fruit. There are some choice examples of the last in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while many beautiful specimens of the bright apple green and cucumber green are to be seen in the same Museum, and, of course, in the British Museum, in the Grandidier Collection in the Louvre, and in other famous continental collections.

A rare mottled green monochrome is often described as " crab shell " green from its resemblance to the shell of a live crab, and the grey Chün glazes of the Sung and early Ming periods are often covered with a film of this colour. The eighteenth-century examples have been most carefully made and they are generally attributed to the potters of the reign of K'ang-Hsi or Yung-Chêng from their material and technique, but the examples are so few in number that they may have been only potters' triumphs which were not greatly appreciated by the later collectors who had such a wealth of glazes and colours at their disposal.

The blue and white painted porcelains of the reign of K'ang-Hsi enjoy the highest repute among collectors of the present day, which such a display as that in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum goes far to justify. There are two reasons for the pre-eminent regard in which such choice, yet strong, examples are held. The blue and white wares of the later Ming emperors are only to be obtained nowadays by some happy accident, while the corresponding wares made during the reigns of Yung-Chêng and Ch'ien-Lung are, not always with absolute justice, supposed to be of inferior rank. This opinion of their inferiority is notoriously upheld by the amateurs in

CHINESE : K'ANG-HSI

Famille verte Bowl
Height 3¼ in., diameter 7⅜ in.

Famille verte Vase
Height 8¾ in., diameter 4⅜ in.

Famille verte Bowl
Height 3¼ in., diameter 7⅜ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

blue and white, and, quite honestly, by the majority of dealers, but a porcelain-maker finds too many exceptions to justify him in accepting, whole-heartedly, such an easy, ready-made classification.

It is not easy to formulate in words the supreme distinctive merits of the finest examples of blue and white of the K'ang-Hsi period, for they reside rather in a just balance of the respective qualities displayed by body, glaze and colour alike, than in the transcendent merit of any one of them regarded separately. We may say that the body of the porcelain is fine, solid and flawless and is shaped into forms of strong, yet subtle beauty enveloped in a pure white but mellow glaze which harmonizes perfectly with the painted blue pigments. One says "pigments" advisedly, for the cobalt blue is of many shades, varying, doubtless, according to the minerals procurable at the time and the degree of purification attainable by the methods followed in refining them. One must always bear in mind that, in this later blue and white porcelain, the chemical purity of the pigment was not at its highest, and many shades of blue were in constant use that are only redeemed from dullness by the masterly way in which they were applied (the brush touch showing both vigour and finesse) and the harmony of tone attained between the painted colour and the glaze, though this is high praise indeed!

All the favourite decorative schemes of the great Chinese artists, whose paintings on silk, paper and other materials are so well known to students of Chinese art, were pressed into service in the painting of porcelain, so that the porcelain-painter may rightly be considered a true brother of the aritsts' craft. We, consequently, find decorative motives based on all the subjects in which the Chinese delight.

Flowers, birds and animals are an unfailing source of alert and joyous study, whether they are rendered in firm, nervous outline with delicate washes to suggest the form or indicate the relief, or by a few telling strokes only, in incisive and precise brushwork. Landscapes and rivers with birds, animals and boats (the familiar "Willow Pattern" is an anglicized version of such a subject), and often with scenes of battle or the chase, are found on another extensive group of vases and large dishes, as well as renderings of quieter domestic scenes in gardens or interiors. Worshipful sages of myth and legend, historical personages renowned for filial piety, and ceremonial subjects both religious and domestic, form another large group. In every case such pieces are completed by bands of ornament and borders (which sometimes extend into the ground of the design), painted with more or less appropriate symbols, diapers or arabesques. A popular but more playful decorative scheme, frequently used on slender, high-shouldered vases with knobbed covers, is that irreverently nicknamed "lange Lijsen" (Long Elizas) by the Dutch importers, which are, in reality, tall, graceful figures representing types of Chinese beauties, and known as *mei yên* (pretty girls). From these, one's mind naturally recurs to the pictures of children at their games in the garden or the home, a subject of perennial interest and fondly playful treatment in Chinese art. Such scenes are plentiful in the blue and white of this period, and occasional "ginger jars" are to be found, painted with a decoration known as the "Hundred Boys," where the whole surface of the jar is covered with figures of boys, busily engaged in all kinds of games, painted with great *éclat* in fine, pure cobalt blue.[1]

[1] See Plate VIII., *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Chinese Art*, City of Manchester Art Gallery, 1913.

CHINESE (late 18th Century)

Famille rose Dish and Bowl and Cover

Bowl and Cover—Height 5¾ in., diameter 7⅞ in.

Dish—Diameter 8¼ in.

Gulland Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

A few words must be added to this descriptive appreciation of the blue and white porcelain of this period, in an endeavour to explain the reasons for certain types of design which appear on some of the painted porcelains often found nowadays in European collections. Numerous examples are to be met with in which, though the material and workmanship bespeak the Chinese hand, evidences of foreign feeling or tastes are manifest in the designs. Such wares are well known among examples that are clearly referable to the later reigns of the Ming dynasty, when there was, as we know, a considerable trade in porcelain made for Persia and India. Vases and ewers of distinctive Persian shapes and dishes, sometimes of large size, were summarily painted with typically Persian ornament, often boldly enough designed, in a blue which shows a dirty grey tone in the thin washes, and is blackish with a rusty-looking scum, where it is thickly applied. Much of this ware, probably correctly enough, is attributed to the time of Wan-Li (1573–1619), one of the debased periods of prolific production in Chinese ceramic history. From the time of the Emperor K'ang-Hsi, onwards, the Chinese had to cope with increasing demands for porcelain from Europe. During the greater part of his reign these demands were almost entirely confined to blue and white wares, in which a great trade was quickly developed. At first, no doubt, Chinese porcelain in the native styles was all that was desired, but the idea that the Chinese were an outlandish race with eccentric ideas was too firmly founded to be easily shaken, and a demand soon arose for table wares in shapes and decorations according to European tastes. A large proportion of this export porcelain was decorated with floral patterns and borders much in the usual Chinese manner, but there was also a

great demand among princely and noble families in Europe for services bearing their family crest or arms. Though this porcelain was made at Ching-tê Chên, as is proved incidentally by some remarks in the letters of Père d'Entrecolles, it was sent to Canton as white-glazed ware and decorated by the artists of the famous school of enamellers on metal in that city. This "Canton porcelain," as it is commonly called, is generally overcrowded with figure subjects in Chinese dress and many borders of various diaper patterns, all carried out in the style and colour schemes best known by its French name of *famille rose*. As the European trade was in the hands of the various "India" Companies, as they were called throughout Europe, the ware was foolishly described as "India China," or even attributed to certain obscure European factories, that at Lowestoft being best known to English collectors, though almost every country had some potters engaged in similar work. Further, some of the white wares sent to Canton to be decorated appear to have been passed on to Europe, to be decorated in European faïence or porcelain factories and sold under various designations. It seems difficult to realize the extent of this trade now, but it must have been fairly extensive, for it was carried on not only in England but in France, Holland, Germany, Austria and other countries where porcelain works existed, though Holland and France appear to have been responsible for most of this spurious Chinese ware which exasperates the collector precisely because it is Chinese porcelain, but tricked out in various fraudulent disguises of little or no merit. The occasional examples of Oriental porcelain that bear transfer prints of Battersea or Worcester should be readily identified, as well as the more numerous examples of blue and white Chinese por-

celains now robbed of whatever merit they once possessed by a vulgar European elaboration of over-decoration in dull blue, black, pale green and a thick iron-red enamel, often rather dry of surface.

To return to the blue and white porcelains, there are many beautiful examples, the best of which attain the highest possible perfection of colour and technique, in which the pattern is reserved in the white porcelain, and the ground is washed in with blue in broken tones. The blue and white "ginger jars," as they are commonly called, furnish us with some of the finest and most precious examples of the use of this method of decoration, though it is also exhibited with rare perfection in the designs on a number of tall beakers with trumpet-shaped necks, and often 18 inches high, which are boldly decorated with branches of flowering magnolia, slightly raised above the ground, and further defined and emphasized by an irregular background of pure and brilliant underglaze blue. Such specimens as these can only be appreciated in their varied splendour and magnificence of colour and decoration by repeated examinations of choice examples, and fortunately the collections in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum contain some of the finest specimens that are known to exist, while every important work on Chinese porcelain contains reproductions of such highly valued objects.

A more ordinary application of the same method of decoration is seen on the vases, covered jars and other specimens of medium size, which are decorated with borders composed of lambrequins, arabesques and other conventional patterns designed with great skill, which are usually associated with floral sprays, or with roses, peonies and asters, which in some examples occupy the greater part of

the surface, the arabesques only appearing as borders at the top and bottom of the piece.

The "aster pattern," which was extensively used on saucer-dishes or deep covered bowls, is composed of stiff and formal flowers of the aster type painted in a blue of dark indigo tone, while a pattern usually spoken of as "the tiger-lily pattern" is generally painted in a much purer and brighter blue approaching the blue of the precious "hawthorn" jars, which have just been described, though it must not be supposed that these patterns are invariably painted in one and the same tone of blue, as we find them in blues of many shades.

Attention must also be drawn to a group of pieces with what has been called "panel decoration," where panels in various shapes, petal-shaped with lightly raised outlines, oval, square, circular, or fan-shaped and leaf-shaped, are surrounded by diapers and other formal groundwork patterns, while the reserves are occupied by paintings of the most varied kinds, such as the Four Accomplishments (painting, calligraphy, music and chess), the Eight Taoist Immortals, the Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup, or the Flowers of the Four Seasons. The stories of the Twenty-four Paragons of Filial Piety were also drawn upon, as well as decorations representing groups of vases, furniture and symbolical objects taken from such works as the "Hundred Antiques," but the subjects are so numerous that it is better to refer the reader to a chapter in Mr. Hobson's work,[1] in which he has compiled an extensive list of the numerous motives of decoration that were followed in the painted porcelains of this period and have been used ever since.

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., Chap. XVII., where references will also be found to other sources of information on these subjects and their sources in Chinese literature and painting.

CHINESE : SUNG

Céladon Vase

Height 18 in., diameter 8¼ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

Vase. Deep blue and white. Oak leaf pattern
Height 7 in., diameter 3¼ in.

Plate. Blue and white, with prunus pattern
Diameter 10½ in.

Covered Jug
Height 6¼ in., diameter 3⅜ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Obviously, such specimens as these were intended for use in China, where alone their symbolic and legendary subjects would be understood, but there are other subjects which seem better adapted for use on the export porcelains destined for the European market, such as a well-known saucer-dish, of which there are many examples, decorated with a spirited design of mounted figures of a man and woman hunting a hare, called by Europeans the "Love Chase," which is sketchily painted in pale blue. In the British Museum there is a collection of this "export" porcelain about the date of which there can be no doubt, as it consists of specimens recovered from old wrecks of East Indiamen found in Table Bay, Cape Colony, and presented to the Museum by Mr. H. Adams in 1853. The porcelain is thin, often true egg-shell, and comprises plates, saucer-dishes, cups and saucers, jugs, tankards, bottles and small vases—just the examples we should expect to find in a cargo for Europe—while the designs include the "Love Chase" and other figure subjects, such as a warrior on horseback carrying off a lady (a popular subject of legendary story in every country), scenes from family life or ceremonial, so dear to the Oriental, and, most numerous of all, the famous "Long Elizas," of which one prevalent type—usually decorated with a number of single figures, each enclosed in a small panel or simply separated by flowering shrubs or pots of flowers—is considered to belong particularly to the export wares of the latter half of the reign of K'ang-Hsi.

There is another well-known and interesting group of these "export" porcelains, generally found in the form of bottle-shaped vases with a globular body and a long tapering neck, decorated with flowering scrolls of tight, rosette-like flowers, a pattern which appears to offer us a

Chinese rendering of various popular, Delft-ware patterns, which had, themselves, been derived from Chinese porcelains of an earlier date. Why, at this particular time, there should have been such a great output of these "twice-copied" designs I am unable to say, for such business secrets are seldom committed to writing; but the most probable explanation is that the Dutch merchants, who went to reside in China, took with them from home or had sent out to them, samples of Delft ware so as to explain precisely what it was they desired the Chinese potters to make, knowing full well that the favourite styles of Holland, when reproduced in Chinese porcelain with unmistakable Chinese painting, would provide a successful novelty among their importations into Europe, for a time at least.

The extent to which this trade was carried on is clearly shown both by numerous family records, published and unpublished, and the wealth of specimens still in existence despite the chances of two centuries, often comprising extensive table services which are still fairly complete, and it is clear that these services must have been brought into Europe by the thousand. This trade seems to have first risen to importance early in the eighteenth century, and it continued on a great scale all through that century, despite the rapidly increasing manufacture of porcelains in Europe, especially in those countries which maintained extensive trade relations with the Far East, for the taste for Chinese and other Oriental porcelains was widespread, and the coveted ware was eagerly acquired by all classes above the humbler ranks.

It seems almost unnecessary to add that the bulk of this blue and white porcelain specially manufactured for European use is not remarkable for its excellence, and must have

been contemptuously regarded by the Chinese as fit only for the pushful outer barbarians. The porcelain body and glaze are, on the whole, of second rate or even inferior quality, while the decoration is painted in a dull and heavy blue which is in marked contrast with the fine blue pigment used on the porcelains made for home consumption which have just been described. The brushwork of the decorator is usually as indifferent as the material, while the designs, though unmistakably Chinese, are such as no self-respecting Oriental would have cared to acquire. Those which are generally found take the form of floral scrolls, baskets of flowers and flowering plants, a garden fence or trellis with a rockery and flowering shrubs, or the everlasting repetitions of dragons in waves, a parrot on a stump, or groups of miscellaneous objects copied from the illustrations in the indispensable "Hundred Antiques." The plates and dishes of the table services are generally edged with a lustrous brown glaze, which was supposed to prevent the disfigurement caused by the scaling and chipping of the rims and edges when the pieces were brought into use.

One other fine type of blue and white of this period should be mentioned, viz. the pieces which bear a design, usually of a dragon delicately traced as if with a needle in the paste, with a light cobalt blue dusted into the incised outline before firing. The white glaze was applied over this and when the piece had been fired the dragon appears faintly indicated by dotted lines of blue. Such pieces were probably made in the Yung-Chêng or the later years of the K'ang-Hsi period, though they always seem to bear a Ch'êng-Hua mark.

That variety of blue and white porcelain which is often spoken of as "soft-paste"—an absurd misnomer which

appears to have been first used in America—has an extremely hard body (paste), and the tender and luscious appearance of the porcelain is due to the special glaze, which resembles the glazes of the European soft-paste porcelains in that it contains a proportion of lead oxide. The body of this Chinese "soft-paste" is somewhat dull or earthy looking and is usually quite opaque. The examples generally feel light in weight, quite noticeably so in comparison with a piece of ordinary porcelain of the same size, while the glaze, which varies in tone from a dead white (like chalk) to a creamy tint, has a softly undulating surface as if it had been just under-fired. Crackled blue and white porcelain of this type made its appearance in early Ming times, while there are many examples in existence which bear reign marks of the later Ming emperors. It is not always a simple matter to distinguish old specimens from those belonging to the eighteenth century, which were doubtless made to resemble the coveted Ming pieces as closely as possible, while very recent imitations are only too plentiful. Usually, a collector nowadays may consider himself fortunate if he secures a good example of the eighteenth century manufacture—the era of most skilful reproduction.

The famous and beautiful powder-blue ground which made its appearance in Ming times has already been described,[1] but it was extensively used during these three reigns also and its employment seems to have been continued in China to the present time. There is a most interesting note of its production in the second letter of Père d'Entrecolles, while under the name of *ch'ui ch'ing* (blown blue) glaze it is mentioned in the list of decorations compiled by Hsieh Min. The tiny points of blue pigment,

[1] See p. 31.

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

Peach-shaped Tea-pot.
Famille verte decoration
Height 5 in., diameter 4 in.

Libation Cup, with blue enamel in-decoration
Height 2 in., length 4½ in.

Kylin, supporting a square vase, on brocade base.
Famille verte
Height 5¾ in., width 4¾ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

which soften and spread a little under the solvent action of the glaze, show that the cobalt used was well prepared, and it appears in various shades, both light with a sapphire-like quality and in a darker tone where some of the little points look almost black, and the complete effect is extremely rich and full. In addition to its appearance as a monochrome decoration, where it covers the entire surface of the piece and was, probably, always decorated with finely pencilled patterns in gold, it was extensively used as a ground colour, in which white panels of various shapes were reserved and finally decorated with dainty paintings in underglaze blue or in *famille verte* enamel-colours, for as the Ming examples had been decorated in this way the same colour scheme was naturally followed. In the eighteenth century the reserves in the powder-blue ground were also decorated with paintings in *famille rose* colours.

During this great productive period we may look for the revival of every process of decoration of the previous centuries, and a notable instance is found in the development of the older colour schemes, in which the significant feature is the application of bright enamel-colours, so thickly used that they possess a certain amount of relief, as in the well-known *san ts'ai* or three-colour scheme of green, yellow and aubergine (purple), also known as *famille verte*, or the more abundant typical *Wan-Li wu ts'ai*, in which a bright and lively decoration in red and green enamel-colours is associated with painting in underglaze blue. The most characteristic feature of this latter type of decoration—which, as we shall see, was most extensively followed—is the emphatic use made of an iron-red enamel-colour of a dark and rich coral tint. This red enamel is often so thickly applied that it stands up in slight relief on the porcelain, and

Mr. Hobson has drawn attention to the fact that the very extensive use of the various shades of overglaze coral reds in the enamelled decorations of the late Ming porcelains is indicated by the vernacular name given to the enamellers' workshops at Ching-tê Chên, which are called to this day "red shops" (*hung tien*).[1] Specimens of the covered jars and the beakers, usually of medium size, which are freely and boldly painted in the colours of this scheme, are plentiful enough to-day in the dealers' shops of France, England and Holland. They were undoubtedly manufactured in enormous quantities to supply the export trade with India, Persia and Europe, and, in course of time, they would seem to have gravitated largely to Europe and America, where their bright and effective colour scheme has made them popular, despite a manufacture and finish which are never of the highest quality.

An entirely different colour scheme, which was also brought into extensive use on the Ming porcelains, displays an association of green, turquoise and aubergine glazes, all used in several shades. These glazes, which are usually semi-opaque and finely crackled, do not seem to have made the same appeal to the decorators of the later fine-period as providing the basis of a general decorative colour scheme. On the other hand we find that the individual colours were largely employed as monochromes, while, in the majority of the examples on which they occur, two or three of the colours of this class were frequently applied to one piece of porcelain, as, for instance, in the green and aubergine or turquoise and aubergine washes which were so generally used on the peach-shaped wine-pots, lions with joss-stick holders, parrots and other modelled forms, though they seem

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., p. 81.

CHINESE

K'ANG-HSI

Dish, with Imperial yellow ground. Dragons in green and aubergine

Diameter 16 in.

Burman Bequest.

CHIA CH'ING

Blue glaze Dish, with incised decoration

Diameter 15 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

to have been but rarely applied to dishes or vases of any importance. Perhaps in substitution the bright and transparent green, yellow and purple glazes, which had been in general use on the porcelains which bear finely engraved designs in the clay, were again revived and extensively employed during the reigns of K'ang-Hsi and Yung-Chêng, though these specimens exhibit all the technical precision of their period and are generally in decided contrast to the late Ming examples. The most choice examples of this later work take the form of thinly made rice bowls which bear incised designs of five-clawed dragons, displaying the dragon forms filled in with one of the glazes relieved against a background of another coloured glaze of the series, and, naturally, as these bowls were made for use in the Imperial palaces they bear the reign mark of their period beautifully written in underglaze blue. Allied to these are the well-known and interesting " brinjal bowls," so named from the " brinjal " or aubergine-purple ground, which have a lightly turned out rim, and are decorated with slight floral designs incised and filled in with coloured glazes of yellow, green and white, though there are other examples of similar type and style which display a bright green ground. These " brinjal bowls " are generally marked with the rough undecipherable seal marks in underglaze blue that are known as " shop marks."

Further illustrations of the variety of applications for which this favourite colour scheme was adopted are to be found in the figures and ornamental objects (the latter often of considerable size), in which the details of the modelled designs provide natural raised boundaries to check the spreading flow of the glazes, for on a flat surface the method is only applicable with those mottled or variegated glaze

effects of the well-known "tortoise-shell" and "tiger-skin" types, where a certain amount of spreading in the colour is not objectionable within limits. There are some highly prized ornamental objects, decorated with these coloured glazes, which are constructed in the form of a piled-up mass of rocks among which various grottos and shrines are contrived, each one containing tiny images of deities or worshipful personages with attendant human worshippers, which are often of considerable technical interest also from the skill and the variety of decorative methods displayed in their manipulation. The large vases, as a rule, create a much less favourable impression of the style than is conveyed by the decoration of the small bowls and dishes I have just described, though they are evidently coveted by many collectors, as they sometimes change hands at very high prices. A number of important specimens are reproduced in the work on "Chinese Porcelain and Hard Stones" by Messrs. Gorer and Blacker, and these illustrations being taken from famous examples give a trustworthy guide to the appearance of the vases of this class.

The French term, *émaillé sur biscuit*, is frequently used to describe both these coloured glazes and a series of enamel-colours as well, but the phrase "on biscuit enamels" is a simpler and more correct title for these colours, which are in reality the ordinary enamel-colours painted on the biscuit instead of on the finished glaze of the porcelain. As they were soft and easily vitrifiable colours the pieces to which they had been applied were fired in an ordinary muffle kiln as usual, though owing to the absence of the reflecting white glaze the colours attained a mellower and slightly darker tone. It follows from their composition—for to be fusible at the easier fire they were mixed with a

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

"Dead-Leaf" Vase, with white reserved panels painted in underglaze blue
Height 7¼ in., diameter 4⅞ in.

Vase. *Café-au-lait* (boldly crackled), reserved neck (blue and white), raised ornament strongly painted in blue
Height 16⅝ in., diameter 8⅝ in.

Covered Mug. Nankin yellow and blue and white, with silver mount
Height 6¾ in., diameter 3½ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

greater proportion of white lead—that they are somewhat different in tint from the coloured glazes and more easily became crackled and iridescent. The yellow enamel is generally paler, but where it is dark it is frequently muddy in tone, while the green enamels vary widely in tone from the glazes and exhibit different shades, one of which has a fine apple-green tone; even the aubergine is brightened and becomes markedly pink in tone. Mr. Hobson finds the most distinctive feature of this *san ts'ai* scheme of enamel decoration in the careful tracing of the design in a brown-black pigment on the biscuit, which the transparent enamels cover and enliven without obscuring, and he protests soundly against the common habit of describing such specimens as Ming porcelains, when there are so many examples which are known to have been made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This colour scheme provides us with some of the finest Chinese polychrome vases, on which fine and spirited paintings are displayed against rich grounds of the so-called "Nankin yellow," rich leaf-green or a fine greenish black. Such vases, often of bold dimensions, for they are from about half a yard to nearly a yard in height, bear the favourite design of a flowering prunus tree growing from or beside a rockery and supporting a few bright-plumaged birds among its branches, one of the noblest of Chinese designs in the naturalistic conventional style. There are also many examples of tall four-sided vases—the sides tapering slightly from the convex shoulders, which have a circular neck with a flattened, projecting rim. These are usually decorated with the paintings known as the "Flowers of the Four Seasons"—peony, lotus, chrysanthemum and prunus—on their flattened sides. The finest display of these splendid vases in England

is to be seen in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while there are, likewise, a number of notable examples in the British Museum.[1] A word should be added concerning the technique of this beautiful black ground colour, which French writers have adopted as a descriptive name for the colour scheme—*famille noire*—for the splendidly rich and lustrous effect is obtained by coating a dull black, refractory, underglaze pigment with washes of brilliant and transparent green enamel. Such green enamels, rich in lead oxide, soon become iridescent by atmospheric action and would, thus, impart fresh life to the surface of the black ground, a characteristic feature which the modern copyist is apt to stress in his deceptive imitations, whether they are made in China, Japan, or Europe.

Other decorative schemes in which the same group of enamel-colours plays an important part are used on the vases, bottles, sprinklers and dishes, where white reserves decorated with these colours appear on grounds of powder blue, *café au lait*, pale golden brown (commonly called "Nankin yellow"), bronze colour and dead-leaf brown. This decoration associated with the various opaque yellow or bronze grounds is still frequently spoken of as "Batavian," the name given to it in contemporary lists and letters, because the Dutch settlement of Batavia in the island of Java, and the capital of all the Dutch settlements in the East, was, naturally, the central depot for the Eastern trade, and the porcelains were frequently transhipped there for distribution in Europe. The popularity of this scheme of decoration is shown by the abundance of specimens in

[1] Many excellent reproductions of these famous vases will be found in the important works which treat of the Chinese porcelains of this period

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

Famille noire Vase

Height 27½ in., diameter 10½ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

European collections which are clearly referable to this period and particularly to the early eighteenth century, by the distinctive enamel-colours which are used in their decoration. These comprise various shades of thickly applied and opaque rose-pink, yellow, white and green, though the older style in *famille verte* colours was still extensively followed, and, as at so many other periods in Chinese ceramic history, we witness a struggle for supremacy between an old style of decoration and a newer one.

An interesting and important group of export porcelains, which belongs to this time, is chiefly represented by the plates, saucer-dishes, and tea and coffee cups and saucers, made in egg-shell or semi-egg-shell porcelain of beautiful material and manipulation, which are daintily decorated, apparently in the Canton workshops, in *famille rose* colours; the glazed porcelain, in the white, having been sent from Ching-tê Chên where it was manufactured expressly for this foreign trade. The decoration was executed by the artists and workmen of the school of enamellers on metal in Canton, and the same designs were largely used on the porcelain and on the metal enamels. Some little interest is attached to the work of a well-known Cantonese artist who used the studio name *Pai shih shan jên* (hermit of the white rock) or, in a shortened form, *Pai-shih.* His signature exists on a dish decorated with a design of cock and peonies, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where it occurs in the white ground of the design on the face of the piece, while another of his designs, on a saucer in the British Museum, comprises a skilfully painted vase of flowers and a basket of fruit. This piece is inscribed " a Canton picture " (*Ling nan hui chê*). The same artist's signature is also known on a number of Canton enamels

with skilfully treated landscape designs. Those who are interested may find considerable information on this point, and on the work and signatures of several of these enamellers, in the various works by Dr. Bushell and Mr. Hobson, who have given considerable attention to the matter.

The style of some of these " little masters " of the Canton school was, in turn, imitated at Ching-tê Chên and, probably, some of the enamellers migrated to the porcelain town, for it would be a mistake to suppose that the bulk of the *famille rose* porcelain was decorated outside Ching-tê Chên, especially as we have an abundance of specimens that show little or no trace of the Canton style of design and execution. In addition, some of the other ports which engaged in the foreign trade, such as Shanghai and Amoy, may have had decorating schools of their own of minor importance.

The *famille rose* decoration, undoubtedly, reached its finest period in the reign of Yung-Chêng (1723–35), from which time we find an abundant production of egg-shell porcelain, dishes, services, bowls, etc., decorated with such subjects as a flowering spray, birds on a bough, and similar light and elegant designs, drawn with rare skill, so that one may appreciate the refinement of the white porcelain which is freely displayed. These examples are so perfect in balance and so skilful in decoration that they occupy a position of eminence among the more refined and dainty products of Chinese skill and taste.

The most highly prized examples of this style and period will be found in the egg-shell or " ruby-backed " porcelains, where a refined and beautiful thin, white porcelain is coated, on the exterior of the pieces, such as bowls and dishes, cups and saucers and the like, with a layer or broad

CHINESE

Famille rose Plates. Late 18th Century

Diameter 8¼ in.

Diameter 8 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

band of a gold pink enamel, which was used in shades varying from bright carmine to rich crimson.

In every respect the material and decoration are of the highest refinement—the manufacture of the pieces and the execution of the painting displaying a delicate precision and skill which can never be surpassed. The principal subjects of the painting were evidently drawn from a variety of sources but I must recapitulate a few of those which are best known, such as : a Chinese interior with figures of ladies and children, a pheasant on a rock, a cock with peonies, two quails and growing flowers (the basis of many European designs), groups of vases and furniture copied from Chinese books of drawings, baskets of flowers and dishes of fruit. A striking, almost a distinctive, feature of the style is to be found in the numerous rich borders, from four to seven in number, painted with various diaper patterns including small panels of flowers, or archaic dragons. The most elaborate examples of this class of minutely wrought decoration are known as the " Plates with the Seven Borders," but the type is consistent in all its manifestations and the effect is invariably one of cumulative richness, which is only redeemed from ostentation by the skill and delicacy of its conception and execution. Other examples display fewer borders and less elaboration, for some of the bands bear delicate tracery or scroll-work in gold with bands of ruby colour, either quite plain or interrupted by painted sprays. Larger examples exist in the form of jars and beakers, sometimes of considerable size, where the general ruby ground bears reserved panels, fan-shaped or picture-shaped, i.e. scroll-shaped, which contain delicate little paintings in *famille rose* colours. Though this style of decoration was continued to the end of the

eighteenth century, nothing is likely to depose these Yung-Chêng examples from their little pinnacle in the mountain range, for during the Ch'ien-Lung period the treatment became more and more elaborate until the pieces were overcrowded with figures and ornamental detail, just as the painting became more mannered and stiff, as if from constant repetition of the same subject when life and spirit had departed from it.

We may regard the reign of Ch'ien-Lung (1736–95) as marking the period of slow but gradual decline of decoration in the *famille rose* colours, though it was most extensively used on porcelains of every class, from the finest that could be made to those intended for export. The porcelain-painters were, obviously, striving to obtain the utmost naturalism from the method, as we note the first appearance, apparently, of the European device of shading by mixing the foundation tints with each other or with white enamel, so as to produce the gradations of colour seen in the petals of a flower or in some delicate leaf, the stratified structure of rocks or mountains, the eddying ripples of running water, or the foaming surface of a cataract or a waterfall. But the subjects are extremely varied, as in addition to such landscapes there are many vases decorated with paintings of deer,[1] while we have numerous designs with figure subjects, growing flowers and fruit, and interiors with figures. The most elaborate of these flower pieces are those bearing a design known as the "Hundred Flowers," where the vase looks like one great bouquet in which the flowers are so

[1] Mr. Hobson, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., p. 243, mentions a vase of blue and white porcelain of the late Ming period with such a design, now in the Dresden Collection, but he also reproduces a vase with a painting, in enamel-colours of the "Hundred Deer," which is in the Grandidier Collection in the Louvre.

CHINESE

K'ANG-HSI

Blue and White Bottle. Dragon design

Height 10 in., diameter 4¾ in.

18th CENTURY

Egg-shell Saucer-dish. Figures in colours and light gilding

Diameter 7¾ in.

K'ANG-HSI

Blue and White Vase and Cover

Height 11 in., diameter 4⅝ in.

Cope Bequest, Victoria and Albert Museum.

faithfully represented that their individual species and varieties may be clearly identified.

Apart from their widespread use in painted decoration the various rose colours in all the shades from pale pink to deep rose red appear as monochromes and ground colours, where their tendency to form a wrinkled or orange-skin surface gives them additional value, decoratively. Some of the mixtures thus produced give us new shades among the monochromes, such as lavender, French grey, opaque pink and green, while at the same period we have many blue enamels of fine quality, used as monochromes, such as the "Temple of Heaven" blue with a lovely sapphire tint, and a deep opaque blue which approaches the tint of pure lapis-lazuli.

Among the Ch'ien-Lung single glazes, or hard-fired enamels of comparable appearance, there are a great variety of monochrome effects, often of tender and beautiful quality, comprising many hard-fired céladons of the usual type, and a pale bluish green, nowadays known as "*eau de nil*," which is somewhat more opaque and is probably an over-glaze effect, though so effectively fired that the colour has become incorporated with the outer skin of the glaze. Various yellow glazes and enamels, recalling those of earlier times, were also freely used as monochromes, including several of the iron-yellow glazes of different tints as well as reproductions of the sulphur or waxen yellow, lemon yellow and "crackled" mustard yellow; for at a time when all the reproductions of ancient colours and glazes were in such favour the beautiful choice yellows of the late Ming period were certain to receive attention, so that, throughout the eighteenth century, repeated attempts were made to reintroduce them in all their varieties of surface

and texture, including the invaluable " crackle " for which the older examples were so famous. The list of decorations used at the Imperial factory which was compiled by Hsieh Min has been already referred to and it contains a goodly list of yellows from the pale primrose yellow (*Mi sê*) through various shades of sulphur and lemon yellows to a darker shade of deep amber colour.

Underglaze copper red was freely used both for monochrome effects and in painted decoration, but it was seldom of exceptional quality at this period, and in the majority of the specimens where it was used its best representative is a maroon or liver-tinted red colour, far removed from the flashing reds of the best type, though it is often extremely rich and soft in effect and would be more appreciated but for the favoured position accorded to the brighter tints of the colour.

The overglaze coral red was produced with rare excellence and in great profusion, and I should be inclined to pronounce the reign of Ch'ien-Lung as the best period of its manufacture and application. The colour was extensively used, either in thin and brilliant films which only hide the white porcelain because of the intense opacity of the enamel, or in the more heavily fluxed and thickly applied pigments, called " jujube " red, which have almost the richness and solidity of a glaze. The methods in which this coral red was used seem almost endless, for, in addition to its application in deftly painted scroll patterns on important vases, there is a well-known group of ovoid vases of fine simplicity and purity of outline, usually about 4 inches in height, with a brilliant and uniform external coat of coral red, or displaying finely drawn, white patterns of bamboo growth where the colour has been

CHINESE: K'ANG-HSI

Vase, with powder-blue ground
Height 19¼ in., diameter 7¼ in.

Famille verte Vase, with medallions of powder blue lightly pencilled with gold
Height 17½ in., diameter 7⅝ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

deftly removed before firing, and such examples are as choice and beautiful in effect as they are simple in their method of execution. The coral red was also extensively used for the colouring of porcelains shaped like shells with attached coral branches, and these examples are, usually, exceedingly beautiful both in colour and in surface texture. The quality of this coral red enamel is also seen in its application on the small, carved, white porcelain snuff-bottles and other little articles of *bijouterie* made in imitation of the precious cinnabar-red lacquer, which only the wealthy might hope to possess.

Another bright and cheerful decorative scheme which is found on undoubted K'ang-Hsi porcelains, though it was abundantly and continuously followed throughout the eighteenth century, is distinguished by its finely drawn, scroll-work tracery of the iron-red enamel, bearing rosettes in solid, unburnished gilding. The examples of this style of decoration are, as a rule, noteworthy for their skilful draughtsmanship and for the harmonious and rich effect produced by this combination of dull gold and bright, opaque red, so that one can readily understand why this scheme was so widely adopted in the decoration of European earthenware and porcelain and seems likely to retain its popularity for ever. The most ambitious and splendid Chinese examples of this style are to be found in the decorative treatment of a group of dishes and vases bearing boldly conceived designs, the essentials of which are painted in underglaze blue, while the details serve to introduce the overglaze iron red and other *famille verte* enamels. A magnificent specimen which displays this scheme of decoration is a large dish, some 19 inches in diameter, now in the Alexander Collection, which has been illustrated

and described by Mr. Hobson,[1] while there are a number of important examples in which the same style is followed, in the Salting Collection and in the Franks Collection.

Mention must be made of what is called "sepia painting," which is named in the Imperial list drawn up by Hsieh Min as "porcelain painted in ink" (*ts'ai shui mo*), which can only have been meant to describe the colour-quality, though some people have sought to believe that ink was used for the purpose in spite of the explanation given in the second letter of Père d'Entrecolles written in 1722, where he notes "an attempt made to paint in black some vases with the finest Chinese ink met with no success. When the porcelain had been fired it came out white. The particles of this black had not sufficient body and were dissipated by the action of the fire; or rather they had not the strength to penetrate the layer of glaze or to produce a colour differing from the plain glaze."

It is hardly to be expected that Père d'Entrecolles can have been acquainted with all the colours and processes that were in current use at Ching-tê Chên when he wrote, as it seems to be quite clear now that, within a very few years of that time, the preparation of a fine and reliable underglaze black was, once again, well understood and widely practised, for we have quite a number of specimens in which an excellent underglaze black is used, either alone or with skilful and reticent gilding, for the decoration of the egg-shell and other varieties of the Yung-Chêng porcelains. One extremely interesting example of this black and gold decoration, now in the British Museum, may be mentioned for its subject—for on a plate with many borders, made and decorated with great refinement,

[1] Hobson, R. L., *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., Plate 108.

CHINESE: TAO KUANG

White Goblet, painted in enamel-colours
Height 4⅜ in., diameter 4 in.
Given by Lieut.-Col. Dingwall.

Deep Bowl, painted on panels with ***famille rose*** colours
Height 3⅜ in., diameter 6⅝ in.
Burman Bequest.

White Saucer, painted in imitation of early Meissen (18th Century)
Height 6¾ in., diameter 4½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

a group of Europeans, all in contemporary costumes, is portrayed in a Chinese interior.[1] In the Victoria and Albert Museum, among other examples in this style, I would mention a saucer-dish, also decorated for European use with a copy of a Dutch or German engraving, "The Discovery of Moses by Pharaoh's Daughter," [2] which always recalls to my mind a passage in the second letter of Père d'Entrecolles, where he writes: "They have brought me from the débris of a large shop a small plate that I value more highly than the finest porcelain pieces made a thousand years ago. On the bottom of the plate is painted a crucifix between the Holy Virgin and St. John," etc.

With the revived interest shown in porcelain throughout the period from about 1650 to 1800, we again find a considerable variety of yellow glazes ranging from pale primrose and straw colours to that of the Imperial yellow, which is often likened to the colour of egg-yolk. One of these glazes has led to a certain amount of confusion and misunderstanding; this is the pale, greenish-yellow glaze called by the Chinese "*mi sê*," viz. "millet colour," but it probably corresponds to the full primrose yellow of Chinese silks, for which the same name is used. A considerable number of yellow glazes are mentioned in the list of decorations employed at the Imperial factory which was compiled by Hsieh Min, the governor of the province of Kiang-si from 1729 to 1734,[3] including varieties named millet colour, eel yellow, spotted yellow, yellow after the

[1] This plate is reproduced in Hobson's *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., Plate 131, Fig. 1.

[2] See also *Chinese Art*, Handbooks of Victoria and Albert Museum, Vol. II., Fig. 64.

[3] See Bushell's *Oriental Ceramic Art*, p. 368 *et seq.*, and Hobson's *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II., p. 223 *et seq.*

European style (which Bushell considers to be the lemon-yellow *enamel* first used at this time), and porcelains with yellow glaze (*chiao huang*) decorated in enamels (*wu ts'ai*). "This is the result of recent experiments." From the foregoing, or from the references quoted, it should not be difficult to identify the various shades of yellow, numerous though they are, but fine examples will always be rare. A few choice vases of the eighteenth century and a number of delicate plates and saucers, in which this Imperial yellow appears as a ground colour, may also be cited as examples of its use, and these are to be met with occasionally.

Apart from modern revivals the latest use of the lemon-yellow grounds will be found in the *graviata* bowls, often called "Peking bowls." These were made at Ching-tê Chên and sent to Peking for the use of the Imperial household, and are ordinary rice bowls, displaying enamel grounds of gold, ruby or pink, pale grey or lemon yellow, and, rarely, an enamel blue, closely etched with fine scrolls (hence the name *graviata*), with circular or peach-shaped panels reserved in white and bearing enamel paintings of sprays of flowers and fruit.

THE LATER CHINESE PORCELAINS

Just as one may witness during the closing hours of a glorious summer day a display of grandeur in the evening sky, touching every mundane object with mellow, prismatic light so that even common things become suffused with ethereal beauty, the eighteenth century witnessed an outburst of final splendour in the long and glorious history of Chinese porcelain. Within its span are comprised the last twenty years of the magnificent K'ang-Hsi period;

CHINESE : CH'IEN-LUNG

Table Screen in carved wood stand, *sang de bœuf* ground, painted in high relief in enamel-colours Plaque—Height 13¾ in., width 10 in.

Gulland Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

the short, but, for the collector and historian, important rule of his son Yung-chêng (1723–35); and the long reign of his grandson Ch'ien-Lung (1736–95), which was only closed by his abdication in fulfilment of a vow that, however long his life, he would not out-reign his grandfather.

It seems befitting that it was during the latter part of the reign of K'ang-Hsi, when the Imperial factory at Ching-tê Chên was under the control of one of its most able directors, Ts'ang Yung-hsüan, of whom a later director of the factory wrote: "When Ts'ang was director of the porcelain works, the finger of the god was often seen in the midst of the furnace fire, either painting the designs or shielding them from harm; so that the porcelain came out perfect and beautiful," [1] that Europe should have received the first reliable account of the processes followed in the manufacture and decoration of Chinese porcelain, carefully detailed in the letters sent by the famous Jesuit missionary, Père d'Entrecolles, to the head of the missions in Paris. There are two of these letters, the first written in 1712 and the second in 1722; and they have proved of the greatest value to European students from the information they convey. As the writer was stationed in the province of Kiang-si, and lived for some years at Ching-tê Chên, he seems to have been able to obtain much information from his converts among the workmen, from the magistrates of the town and from other sources, and his narrative is notable for the acuteness of his observations and the general accuracy of the information it conveys. Every subsequent writer on Chinese porcelain has gladly availed himself of these letters and in the hands of recent investigators like Dr. Bushell they have proved their

[1] *Oriental Ceramic Art*, Dr. S. W. Bushell, p. 306.

worth in elucidating many technical points of great interest.[1]

There are strongly marked, distinguishing features in the styles of porcelain decoration and even of manufacture that were in highest favour with the Court during these three reigns, while the demands from Europe, not only for various porcelains in the Chinese styles but for those made and decorated expressly to satisfy European tastes, were constantly increasing; yet, in spite of considerable overlapping of styles and decorative motives during this century, there is, usually, some quality in the porcelain or its treatment—in the material or the colour schemes and styles of painting—which enables us to date, with reasonable accuracy, most of the important eighteenth-century examples.

If we follow the older and more general classification adopted or invented by European writers, the eighteenth century witnessed the gradual displacement of the *famille verte* by the *famille rose*, with all that these broadly descriptive terms imply as an index of the taste and aims of those who directed contemporary production and inspired its decoration, in response to the demands of emperors who were themselves notable connoisseurs. Thus, though the famous *famille verte*, in all its strength and purity, practically ends with the reign of K'ang-Hsi, more delicate versions of its characteristic colours were in use for more than a century after his reign. We have a fairly large group of well-known examples in the various European collections, usually in the shape of bowls and dishes, though vases are also fairly plentiful, bearing incised designs of

[1] The best edition of these letters will be found in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuse écrites des Missions étrangères*, Paris, 1780–83, Vol. XVIII.–XIX. A reliable translation of their essential parts is given in *Porcelain*, by W. Burton. Cassell and Co., London, 1906.

five-clawed dragons pursuing flaming pearls, which are freely painted over with boldly drawn flowering sprays of rose, peony, etc., or with fruiting pomegranate branches firmly outlined in black and washed in with bright, transparent aubergine, light and dark green, and bright, pale yellow colours. The irregular patches of ground space that remain are covered with a thin, greenish white enamel, which is strongly iridescent, as all such greenish enamel-colours are apt to be, either from accidental fuming in the kiln, or because of a subsequent slow decay of their surface from atmospheric influences.

Such bowls and dishes almost invariably bear the K'ang-Hsi mark, though their style and finish seem to proclaim the influence of the latter half of the eighteenth century; while some authorities, like Mr. Hobson, appear to find such pieces comparable to the best examples of the Tao-Kuang (1821–50) period rather than to the acknowledged porcelains of the reign of K'ang-Hsi.

Throughout the eighteenth century, despite the steadily increasing favour in which the brilliant enamel-colours were held, blue and white painted porcelains were still produced in quantity. Speaking quite generally, one may safely say that the blue itself is no longer so pure and full in tone, while the white is harder and brighter of aspect, for the glaze usually lacks that faint tinge of colour which so softly harmonizes the painted pigment and its surrounding white ground in the finest examples of every period. Admitting all that is to be said regarding the delicate *nuances* of this esteemed colour scheme and its treatment, there seems to be a general tendency nowadays to stress this point of the supposed inferiority of the blue and white porcelains of the eighteenth century. I believe it would

be fairly easy to select from the great number of fine examples in public and private collections a notable group of eighteenth-century blue and white porcelains which would compare favourably with those made in any previous century. Possibly, the abundance of these later blue and white porcelains confuses our judgment and we are apt to overlook the best from sheer eye fatigue.

In any consideration of the various decorative schemes in which painting in underglaze blue plays an important part, the bowls and vases with pierced "rice grain" ornament should not be overlooked, for this favourite device of the Oriental potter-artist was extensively practised during the eighteenth century. This rice grain decoration has already been mentioned, for it is found on undoubted Chinese examples of the early fifteenth century; but, like so many other technical triumphs, it reached perfection, so far as China is concerned, during the eighteenth century, when in the hands of the potters of the Ch'ien-Lung period especially it acquired that sureness and delicacy of finish which is the hall-mark of that reign.

The masterpieces in this mode of decoration are to be found among those examples where a lace-like pattern, based on peony growth, enfolds the surface of the bowl or vase, the whole being enveloped by a glaze with a faint tinge of pure, bright céladon, glowing in jewel-like colour where it closes the perforations. Delicate painted patterns in light blue tracery complete the designs, and this tracery usually displays the touch of an accomplished craftsman as seems befitting to such refined and delicate examples of the potter's skill.

The distinguishing feature of the decorative colour schemes of the eighteenth century is to be found, however,

CHINESE: CH'IEN-LUNG

Famille rose Figure (late 18th Cent.)
Height 11½ in., diameter 3¾ in.
Florence Bequest.

White Bottle, with green and gilded dragon
Height 10 in., diameter 5¼ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

in the prevalent use of the various ruby and rose-tinted enamels derived from gold, which, from a position of secondary importance in the colour schemes of the late seventeenth century, now assumed the first place in the esteem of Court circles and furnish the dominant colour note of the eighteenth-century decorations. Among Europeans and Americans, the French term *famille rose* not only tersely indicates the tone of the predominant colours,[1] but is frequently—probably generally—applied as a descriptive designation for all the porcelains decorated in this style. Vases with finely painted decorations in this colour scheme are abundant, but the most highly prized examples are comprised in the large class of shallow bowls, saucer-dishes and plates. These rank among the costly treasures of the great collectors, and famous European potters have been inordinately proud of their success in duplicating specimens of this coveted porcelain. In the museum at Sèvres there are examples of Chinese and Sèvres porcelains of this class exhibited side by side.

As a rule, to which there are few exceptions, the *famille rose* porcelains are made in the most refined and translucent body and glaze, and are often of egg-shell thinness, having their surfaces almost hidden under precisely and dexterously painted ornament in pure, bright shades of rose colour, carmine, pink, bright azure blue, lemon yellow, greens (dark and light) and black, heightened and still further enriched by the introduction of metallic gold and silver in lines, bands or tracery.

The most choice and dainty examples of this delicately

[1] Chinese writers have named the brilliant enamel-colours of this class "foreign colours." Personally, I have no doubt that they originated in Europe, and that the knowledge of their composition was taken to China, probably by the Jesuit missionaries, almost as soon as they were known in Europe.

elaborate style of decoration, often of miniature-like finish, will be found among the bowls, saucers and plates, which display on their under sides a ground of deep carmine or rose colour, thickly applied, so that the enamel generally acquires an orange-skin texture, which greatly enhances the beauty of the colour, as it imparts more life and variety to the surface. "Ruby-back" is a most appropriate designation for these dainty productions, and the lavish enrichment and exquisite finish will always secure for choice specimens the especial favour of collectors of eighteenth-century Chinese porcelains. Noteworthy examples of these delicate and skilful productions are to be seen in the British Museum, and especially in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the Salting Bequest affords a fine feast for admirers of these and other renowned porcelains of the eighteenth century, while the style is well represented among the numerous minor bequests received by the Museum in recent years.

The pierced lanterns, made in the finest porcelain which is often of egg-shell thinness, are amazing examples of the skill displayed by the potters of this period in dealing with materials of the utmost refinement, where it was necessary to control the firing process to a nicety that the piece should retain its shape at all; though the number of examples existing in Western collections alone proves that they must have been manufactured in some abundance. These lanterns are often as much as 14 inches high, and the open-work, in lattice form, encloses, in the middle of each side, a circular medallion which is finely painted and gilded. Such specimens demand the most careful examination if one is to appreciate every detail of the dexterity and skill displayed in their manufacture and

decoration; but, fortunately, choice examples are to be found in the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, which will repay the most careful and critical inspection, for they are *tours de force* among those eighteenth-century Chinese porcelains where material and workmanship are exalted to the utmost degree of refinement.

Rarest, and consequently most coveted by the *cognoscenti*, among the eighteenth-century triumphs of refinement and skill, is the highly vitrified and therefore glassy-looking porcelain invented by T'ang Ying, during his directorate of the Imperial factory (1728-49), in avowed imitation of the famous opaque glass of "Ku-yüeh Hsüan." [1] This milk-white glass, which English writers generally compare to the opaque Bristol glass of the eighteenth century, was delicately painted with designs in the usual *famille rose* enamels, and the Emperor is said to have commanded, for the Imperial Palace, porcelains with a similar quality of aspect and decoration. The problem of making a highly vitrified and therefore glassy-looking porcelain was solved by T'ang Ying, and this special porcelain has always been highly appreciated by the Chinese, by whom it is distinguished under the appellation "imitation of Ku-yüeh Hsüan," (*fang ku yüeh hsüan*). Dr. Bushell has figured and described a yellow-glazed porcelain snuff-bottle, decorated with crabs, and crackled so as to resemble the glass, which is marked in underglaze colour beneath the base, "Ku yüeh Hsüan." [2]

No account of the eighteenth-century Chinese porcelains

[1] This studio name, which means "Chamber of the Ancient Moon," was used by an artist who, about 1735, invented a special white opaque glass from which he fabricated small wine-cups, snuff-bottles, etc.

[2] Bushell, S. W., *Chinese Art*, Handbooks of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Vol. II., Fig. 74.

would be reasonably complete which overlooked that extensive class of interesting but secondary wares in which the patient, imitative skill of the Chinese workmen and their fondness for deceptive mimicry are carried to their furthest limits. Apart from the important groups which have been already dealt with in some detail, the greatest activity and ingenuity were displayed in the invention of glazes, colourings, stipplings and various minute elaborations of surface texture which enabled the porcelain-decorator to mimic, with deceptive skill, the appearance and even the grain or texture of a host of natural or artificial substances, such as coral, lac, enamel and glass, bamboo and other woods, shells of many kinds, shagreen, carved rhinoceros horn, lead or pewter, rusted iron, copper (either bright or coated with verdigris), malachite, azurite (blue copper ore), bronze displaying many varieties of patinas, embossed gold and silver, jade, cornelian, agate and other hard stones, amber, inlaid mother-of-pearl and lacquer. Such "imitative" porcelains were, of course, no new development born of the eighteenth-century activities, for they are almost as old as porcelain itself—especially if we regard the céladons as originally made in imitation of jade—but these eighteenth-century examples mark the culmination of all such attempts at mimicry. There are two table cases of these clever, mimetic, porcelains —for the examples are usually small in size—in the Franks Collection in the British Museum, while there are many examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum also, in the Gulland and other collections housed there.

Two noted glazes which strikingly exemplify the skill and taste of the eighteenth-century potters of Ching-tê Chên are the so-called "iron rust" and "tea dust" glazes,

CHINESE

Vase and Cover. Powder-blue ground with white panels painted in blue
Height 18 in., diameter 10 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Vase and Cover
Height 17¾ in., diameter 10 in.

which, though very dark in tone and somewhat sombre in effect, possess a rare and refined beauty of aspect and texture. Both these glazes are in the nature of crypto-crystalline glazes, where the texture and colour effect are greatly influenced by the segregation of fine crystalline plates, probably allied in composition to certain natural micas, which arrange themselves in streaks or lines, and thus produce the effects to which the Chinese have given these descriptive names. The "iron rust" (*t'ieh hsiu*) glaze is distinguished by its deep golden-brown ground colour, sprinkled with glistening, metallic-looking particles, and sometimes softly dappled or clouded with passages where a deeper red, like that of rusty iron, shows through. The "tea dust" (*ch'a yeh mo*) glaze [1] bears a film of dull, fine specks, of a tea green colour, masking the surface of a deep brown or a dark green glaze, so that the porcelain looks like a finely patinated bronze. This glaze is occasionally found on porcelains bearing the Yung-Chêng mark, but the majority of the eighteenth-century examples belong to the period of Ch'ien-Lung, though it appears to have continued in use throughout the nineteenth century and is still manufactured in China, if not for home consumption at least for export.

These, and some other glazes of comparable technique, cannot be regarded as new inventions or discoveries of this fertile period, for they appear to be revivals of imitative devices first practised in remote times and now carried to perfection on the fine, eighteenth-century porcelain. There are, for example, well-known dark, olive green glazes,

[1] This glaze was one of those which were reserved, by special decree, for use in the Imperial Court. To evade this restriction, Chinese collectors are said to have stuck rivets into such pieces as they managed to secure as though they had been cracked, for only perfect specimens were allowed in the palaces of the Emperor.

flecked with " tea dust," on some of the hard-fired brownish stonewares of the Sung period, or earlier, to which these more modern specimens bear a strong family likeness—for, when all else failed, the Chinese potter could always fall back on the work of his remote predecessors for hints of a new style, or he could revive an old and almost forgotten one in full assurance that his work would charm the Chinese connoisseur provided it was well done. The Western collector who appreciates the porcelains of this class is usually well informed on all such points, but only experience and repeated handling of old examples and their more modern reproductions will safeguard one from the wiles of the clever counterfeiter of the eighteenth century or of the present day.

To all appearance the delight in sheer dexterity of imitation is carried to its highest point—it is certainly displayed with the utmost imaginable refinement and elaboration—in the examples of a style of enrichment generally called by their French name, " *Porcelaine laquée burgautée*," the last term being derived from the " burgau " shell, which furnished the mother-of-pearl used in the process.[1] The porcelain pieces which were to be decorated in this manner, comprising jars, bowls and deep dishes, often of considerable size, were specially manufactured with the greater part of their surface devoid of glaze, though the rims or expanding lips might be glazed, in the usual way, over a conventional border pattern painted in underglaze blue. Subsequently, these unglazed surfaces were coated with fine, black lacquer in which thin plates or minute fragments of mother-of-pearl, and often, in addition, delicate

[1] This elaborately ornate ware is believed to have been made as early as the reign of K'ang-Hsi, but most of the examples belong to the eighteenth century.

inlays of chased or engraved gold and silver, were inset so as to form elaborate designs, representing palace or garden scenes with figures and emblems. Every example of this highly wrought porcelain is a veritable masterpiece of patient and finicking dexterity, for the bits of coloured shell are very thin and must be tinted, shaped and finally inlaid as a tiny piece of mosaic, so that every particle may contribute its detail to the minute finish of the picture. Dr. Bushell singled out, as a *chef-d'œuvre* in this naturalistic style, a large bowl preserved in the Sèvres Museum on which is depicted a lake scene, with lotus flowers, reeds and waterfowl; but examples which display all the essentials of the process and are of the finest execution are to be seen in the British Museum and in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The entire process followed in this elaborate method of ornamentation is as far removed from true ceramic technique as can well be imagined, and the only reason for describing it in such detail arises from the fact that porcelain forms the body or groundwork of the examples.

Among the large class of objects in porcelain which display deceptive metallic "patinas," there are numerous examples which present a marked superficial resemblance to copper, bronze, or rusted iron, and in the best of them the appearance is so deceptive that the lightness of the specimen, when it is first handled, is quite startling and uncanny. A favourite effect of this class, which is designated "ancient bronze colouring" (*Ku-t'ung-ts'ai*), offers a wonderful resemblance to the alloy after which it is named, for its prevalent tone is bronze colour with minutely pencilled or stippled touches of gold in the salient parts, while there are incrustations of greenish blue enamels here and

there in the hollows, just where one would expect traces of verdigris to occur if the object were actually shaped in the alloy it so deceptively simulates. This is only one among many imitations of bronze, but it is quite the best of its class and takes high rank among the imitative porcelains of this period.

The imitations of copper, rusted iron and hæmatite are not so numerous, nor are they found on such important pieces as the imitations of the various kinds of bronze, but they often display great technical cleverness, and examples of both types may be found in the collections already mentioned.

The refined porcelain material and the great variety of bright enamel-colours in common use encouraged the manufacture of the numerous specimens which reproduce the colour, texture and markings of coral and shells of many kinds. The overglaze iron red (*mo-hung*) was brought to its highest perfection and was extensively used on the pieces made in various shell-like shapes, which generally bear attached coral branches forming an open foot for the piece or adhering to the sides of the shell. The coating of colour is thin, but it is always bright and solid, as in all but the thinnest films this iron red is quite opaque, so that it never interferes with or obscures the delicacy of the modelling. Quite a number of small ovoid vases are to be met with, made in a fine white porcelain of beautiful quality, which display a perfectly even ground of pure iron red on the outside undisturbed by ornament.[1] Other

[1] Examples of this iron red overglaze of the finest quality are to be found in the Salting Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while the Gulland Collection there contains many examples of the pieces made in various shell-like shapes which display this colour in almost all its shades. The Grandidier Collection in the Louvre in Paris is rich in examples.

examples of these ovoid vases, and various simple jar shapes, generally about 4 inches high, have been skilfully decorated by wiping out the enamel, before it was fired and fixed to the glaze, with a sharpened bit of stick, so that a simple pattern—usually of growing bamboos or reeds—appears in the white porcelain against the uniform red-ground. Many choice and skilful examples of the application of this colour will be found among the little carved pieces, snuff-bottles and the like, and on these objects the clever manipulation of the carving and the colour produces a close imitation of the more valuable red lacquer which was used for identical purposes by people of rank.

"Tortoise-shell" glaze—the very name conjures up to us visions of the glazes made by the contemporary potters of Staffordshire—was also freely used on snuff-bottles and small vases. This is a glaze of mingled colours, where irregular patches of dark, transparent brown sink and soften into a ground of crackled yellow glaze so as to produce the appearance of translucent tortoise-shell. At this period the Japanese were also making use of a similar colour scheme of mingled glazes, but as these were applied on the Satsuma earthenware they should be readily distinguishable from the Chinese examples, which have a fine solid porcelain body. There is a certain amount of amusement to be drawn from this display of strictly comparable devices in coloured-glaze decoration in use at the same time on Chinese porcelain, Japanese Satsuma and Staffordshire earthenware.

The tough horn of the rhinoceros has, through many centuries, provided a favourite object on which the patient skill of the Chinese carver could be expended, and porcelain imitations of these carved horns are among the productions

of the eighteenth century. They call for little comment here, as their technique offers no point of special novelty or ingenuity of imitation, but they are fine and elaborate examples of that combination of bold, free modelling with skilful carving and incising which is so often displayed in this age.

The preparation and colouring of shark-skin to form the fine material known as "shagreen" has, for centuries, been skilfully practised in the Far East,[1] and there are numerous examples of imitative porcelains, mostly belonging to the eighteenth century and particularly to the latter half of it, in which the appearance and colour of shagreen are closely reproduced. These imitations were made both in China and Japan, but the examples from the former country can generally be distinguished by the superior solidity of the porcelain, though there is little or no difference in the skill and workmanship of the Chinese and Japanese examples.

There is little of value to be said of the Chinese porcelains of our own time, for, so far as one is able to judge by the examples shown at the latest International Exhibitions since that at Paris in 1900, though there is a considerable amount of experimental work going on in the manufacture of many favourite varieties of the older wares, such as the black-ground vases, *flambé* glazes of many kinds and carved and pierced decoration with painting in underglaze blue, as well as blue and white painted porcelains of the more ordinary types, it cannot be said that the work is of great importance, and its only value is to show that the knowledge still exists and a breath of fresh energy may once more fan it into flame.

[1] This may itself have been an imitation of the shagreen made in the countries of the Nearer East from the skin of the wild ass.

CHAPTER III

JAPANESE AND COREAN PORCELAINS

JAPAN has, for many centuries, been able to show an active, highly ingenious and skilful race of potters, whose greatest triumphs have been wrought in earthenwares and stonewares, for in these species of pottery they have given full play to their exuberant yet fastidious fancy. Here they must be recognized as notable leaders and teachers among the potters of the world, for their artistic productions in these materials present such delightful qualities of surface and texture that they have given a fresh impetus to many artist-potters in Europe and, in recent years, to those of America also.

In porcelain their work shows many signs of its derivative position, for Chinese porcelain towers far above it in power and originality, even though certain schools of Japanese porcelain-painters perfected various decorative schemes which were so popular in Europe that, for a time, they were more used here than in Japan itself and ousted almost every other kind, except the blue and white, from general favour and imitation. These styles were in themselves so distinct in ideals and methods that they might almost seem to mark the productions of different races of men if their history were not so well established.

First for its simple beauty and the deceptively artless appearance of its decoration is the porcelain always distinguished by the name of its inventor, Kakiyemon, who is credited with the firm establishment of the art of

decorating porcelain with bright enamel-colours and fired gilding in Japan. This famous potter, whose work was to have such world-wide influence, is believed to have been at work at Imari about 1647, and as the Dutch traders who were settled at Nagasaki bought large quantities of the ware for export to Europe, where it was soon in great demand, the success of the factory was assured. Though several varieties of decoration were extensively followed at Imari, the bright and delicate style to which the name "Kakiyemon" is generally applied as a distinguishing title has always been a prime favourite with European porcelain-painters, who have imitated it in the most whole-hearted fashion. On a ground of soft white porcelain of great surface tenderness a decoration consisting of scattered flowers of prunus and other trees, bright, alert birds and flowering gardens, trimly disposed with their lattice-work fences, and occasionally a sportive Chinese boy, are the best known. Other examples may display a dragon, tiger or phœnix, with floral medallions here and there to occupy the irregular spaces of otherwise plain surface.

By 1660 this type of decorative ware was fully developed, and was launched on its career which, as we have seen, was to result in that European flattery in the shape of widespread imitation in France, Holland, England and elsewhere. One may, perhaps, remark in passing that the soft-paste porcelain of Chantilly, made under the patronage of the Prince de Condé in avowed imitation of Japanese porcelain, adopted the Kakiyemon style of decoration, and so successful were its productions on a soft stanniferous glaze borrowed from the technique of the French faïence-makers that it would often be difficult to distinguish these dainty French pieces from the Japanese,

JAPANESE: NABESHIMA

(late 18th or early 19th Century)

Dish

Diameter 12¼ in.

Cope Bequest, Victoria and Albert Museum.

but that the softer Chantilly glaze is generally rubbed and worn from use.

The quail and wheatsheaf patterns of the early English porcelain made at Bow are, of course, well known, and similar adaptations of these Japanese designs formed favourite decorations with the contemporary painters at Chelsea and at Worcester, though some of these English patterns seem to have followed the Chantilly examples even more closely than they did the original Japanese ware.

To return to the Japanese porcelains which, either were not exported or have been less widely imitated in Europe we must take up again the history of the factory at Arita from which our digression started. The growing success of the numerous European porcelain factories brought about the diminution, almost to the vanishing point, of the Japanese export trade, and this condition lasted until about the middle of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the Japanese potters were increasingly impelled to manufacture only such porcelains as would satisfy the more critical native taste. Some time about 1830 the industry appears to have fallen on evil days, and was carried on indifferently until the reopening of trade with Europe and America brought it a fresh lease of life from 1858.

Okawachi-yama was a little place about eight miles from Arita in the province of Hizen, where a colony of Corean potters was established about 1600, by Nabeshima Naoshige, feudal chief of the province. They appear only to have made various kinds of pottery, including some stonewares, but, after the introduction of the manufacture of porcelain at Arita, renewed attention was given to the production of porcelain, though success only began

about 1660, when the chief of the province determined that fine porcelain should be made, and settled the best workmen from the surrounding countryside at Okawachi (generally pronounced Okōchi). The necessary minerals seem to have been brought from Arita, and as the famous Nabeshima wares, as the porcelains made at Okawachi are generally called, were not intended for sale but for the private purposes of the patron only, great skill was lavished on their manufacture and decoration, so that this *Nabeshima-yaki* takes high rank among the Japanese porcelains of the period.

These porcelains are of fine quality and finished manipulation, for the body is white and finely wrought, while the glaze is bright and well fired so that it presents a fine and brilliant surface. Painting in underglaze blue was executed with distinction, though the tone of the blue is not equal to that found on the classic Chinese blue and white. The fame of the Nabeshima porcelains rests, chiefly, on those which are decorated with overglaze or enamel-colours, and the underglaze blue becomes less and less important, until, in the important group in which the Kakiyemon style of decoration was followed, it entirely disappears. The influence of Chinese decorative ideas seems obvious in the designs comprising landscapes with figures, but the more usual decorations follow familiar native styles, for they comprise combinations of floral or conventional borders with or without Japanese diapers. The most characteristic patterns are those which are painted in overglaze red and a little solid gilding with skilful paintings of cherry branches in bloom or sprays of chrysanthemums, hydrangeas, and peonies, displaying both flowers and foliage, together with birds and butterflies.

JAPANESE

IMARI (ARITA)

Dish (18th Century)
Diameter 9¼ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

KUTANI

Octagonal Jug (17th Century)
Height 8⅛ in. diameter 4⅝ in.
Salting Collection.

KAKIYEMON

Dish (17th Century), painted in iron-red, black and gold
Diameter 9⅝ in.

JAPANESE

SANDA

Incense Burner. Céladon Glaze (1710)
Height $8\frac{5}{8}$ in., length $8\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

SETO

Incense Burner (1830). Blue and white perforated
Height $7\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter $4\frac{7}{8}$ in.

HIRADO (MIKAWAJI)

Lion standing on a Rock (1790)
Height 7 in., length $8\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Since 1858 Arita has again shown considerable activity and now boasts two companies of potters, whose wares are intended both for native use and for export. The earlier of these companies, known as the *Koransha* (The Company of the Fragrant Orchid), was founded in 1876 by Fukagawa Ezaiemon, while in 1880 the *Seiji-sha* (Pure Ware Company) split off from this under one Tsugi, a well-known artist-potter, and its products were principally intended for export to Europe and to America—the latter of which had almost become the more important market—especially for the large trumpet-necked vases, great plaques and pedestal lanterns, made in a rather coarse porcelain, which seem to have been largely made at this factory during recent years, and which offer little of interest to the true connoisseur.

Another factory of some repute was that of Kameyama, near Nagasaki, which was founded about 1803, its site being suggested by its proximity to this important trading centre as well as the accessibility of the island of Amakusa, where porcelain materials of good quality were worked. Blue-and-white appears to have been chiefly made, but the ware is inferior in quality to that of Arita, for the body is less sound and vitreous, while the blue colour is not so deep and full. This factory belonged to the Jingoro family, the first potter being Okami Jingoro, of Nagasaki. He was followed by Okami Buhei till 1839, when on his death the direction fell to Okami Jingoro the second. He however removed to Nawashiro-gawa, in Satsuma, and died in 1878.

An independent attempt to restart the factory was made in 1872 by Kamei Sahei, a potter from Arita, but his ware proved inferior and he gave up the enterprise

very quickly, so that his work deserves no more than this passing mention.

Sanda, in the province of Setsu, boasted a faïence factory of some note from about 1690, under the patronage of Kuki, feudal chief of the province; but about the end of the eighteenth century Kandà Sōbei, a merchant of the town, founded a considerable factory and brought potters and painters from Hizen and Kioto to make blue and white porcelain. In 1801 suitable materials were discovered in the vicinity for the manufacture of a céladon porcelain, and this became the more characteristic product of the factory. Brinkley states that three artists, Shūhei, Kumakichi and Kamesuke, were brought from Kioto, and the céladons made under their auspices are famous. The glaze is of a pure bright grass-green colour, and a typical example of the ware will be found in the collection of Japanese porcelains in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where there is a well-modelled incense-burner in the form of a cock, though the label antedates it by about a century.

The blue and white porcelain is often very delicately painted in the pure light Japanese cobalt, and many pieces have decorations in somewhat inferior enamel-colours as well.

Kanda Sōbei died in 1828, and the factory was purchased by Mukai Kidayu, but he abandoned it in 1850, though it was restarted by Tanaka Riemon some four years later, but these doings seem to have been unimportant.

Seto, in the province of Owari, was one of the seats of the early pottery industry of Japan, but porcelain only makes its appearance there round about 1800, when Tsugane Bunzaemon Taneomi, governor of Arsuta, the port of Nagoya, is said to have set up a kiln at his residence

JAPANESE: IMARI

Square Bottle

Height 9 in., width 4¼ in.

Dish

Diameter 12½ in.

Salting Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

and engaged some potters of Seto to work for him. The discovery of porcelain materials in the vicinity seems to have aroused a desire to master the secrets of porcelain manufacture, and a potter, Kato Tamikichi, was sent to Hizen, and by the aid of an abbot of the temple of Tōkōji in the island of Amakusa, and after some years of wandering service at various porcelain factories in the provinces of Hirado and Hizen, he returned to Seto in July, 1807, where he was treated as a hero and handsomely rewarded by the Prince of Owari. A porcelain kiln was built and the industry has flourished at Seto to our own times. Blue and white wares have been continuously and extensively made from the earliest period, and the best specimens of this kind have a bright transparent greenish blue, painted with great skill and tenderness on a porcelain of soft and chalky quality to the touch. Some choice examples of this porcelain were presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Queen Victoria and are now displayed among the Japanese porcelains in the Ceramic Galleries, where they will well repay careful examination, as they doubtless represent the best productions of the factory; at all events they convey a delightful impression of a strong yet refined type of decoration executed in masterly brushwork or a mixture of brushwork and modelling.

The fact should also be mentioned that Seto, since about 1870, has sent out into the world large quantities of porcelain decorated as if it were metal, in the style of cloisonné enamels, though the enamels generally have a dull and pitted surface compared with those found on a metal base. Apologists for this adapted and false decoration of porcelain plaintively state that it was only the vitiated taste of foreign buyers that caused such wares to be made, regardless

of the fact that they were made for native delectation when the foreign trade did not count, and the manufacture still continues at Nagoya, the chief town of the province of Owari. Typical specimens of these wares are also exhibited in the same section of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Another type of imitative ware made at Seto is likewise well represented in this collection, viz. porcelain made to resemble bronze or rusted iron, and with storks, dragons and blossoming trees painted in gold of various tones to look like inlay of the precious in the baser metals.

A coarse porcelain with bold designs in overglaze colours was made at Yedo down to about 1860 by an Owari potter who had learnt the art at Seto, though in all probability this ware, known as Setōsuke yaki, was made by the son of the potter who had learnt the art at Seto, and who was known, doubtless from this circumstance, as Setōsuke, for we can hardly imagine a potter who established a factory in 1770 being still at work in 1860.

Another ceramic centre in the province of Owari lies in the district of Mino, where pottery of various kinds had been made at three or four centres from at least the middle of the sixteenth century. Porcelain is said to have been made here in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but about 1830, certainly, the Ichi-no-kura factory made a delicate egg-shell porcelain decorated with dainty designs in underglaze blue, and this ware is famous even among the finer porcelains of Japan. Small tea-cups and bowls or tiny wine-cups are the usual forms of the pieces; the outside being usually left in the plain white glaze and the inside decorated with deftly drawn designs, among which

SETO (19th CENTURY)

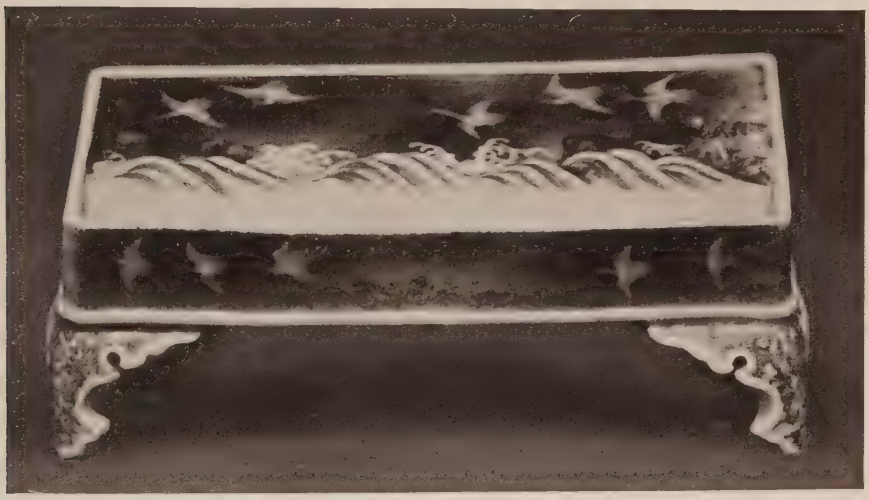
Blue and White Bowl with Cover

Height $3\frac{7}{8}$ in., diameter $6\frac{1}{8}$ in.

IMARI (OKAWACHI)

Blue and White Bowl with Cover (1770)

Height $7\frac{1}{2}$ in., diameter 6 in.



SETO (19th CENTURY)

Blue and White Stand for Washing Pens

Length $9\frac{3}{8}$ in., width $3\frac{3}{8}$ in.

JAPANESE

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Brinkley [1] singles out: "An outline sketch of Fujiyama, its blue head touched by golden clouds among which floats a flock of cranes; or, it may be, a single branch of plum bloom, peeping apparently through mists that hide a forest of flowers; or, again, the gable of a cottage, its rustic eaves overshadowed by a pine bough."

Among the modern productions of this district, the elaborate and delicate *Tajimi-yaki* is remarkable for its modelled work in the round, taking the forms of plum blossom or wistaria copied as closely from the natural blossoms as possible, which are all very well as triumphs of technical skill, but fail to arouse enthusiasm if they are considered as works of art appropriate to the porcelain technique. This elaborate ware is quite a modern production, for it seems to have come into notoriety at the first Japanese exhibition of native manufactures in 1877. Fortunately, its cost, as well as the risks of transport, have confined most of the examples to Japan.

Quantities of the egg-shell porcelain made at Mino were sent to Tokio to be decorated, and it was afterwards encased in fine basket-work made in the province of Suruga, partly for protection and also to heighten its delicacy by force of contrast.

Tokio since 1863 has had a porcelain works producing a certain amount of blue and white porcelain, but it is more renowned for its schools of decorators, who paint both pottery and porcelain brought from various factories in other centres of manufacture. The best known of these decorating workshops is that of Hyochi-en, established in the Fukagawa suburb of the capital in 1876, for the preparation of specimens for the first Tokio exhibition of that

[1] *Japan and China*, by Captain F. Brinkley, Vol. VIII., p. 303.

year. Some good Japanese decorators were employed here, and after the exhibition they applied decorations of their own on any porcelains that were obtainable,[1] whether of Japanese or foreign manufacture, often to the confusion of the collector, for the workshop is still carried on and may outrival some of the European workshops of the same class.

No student of Japanese ceramics will need to be reminded that much of this skilfully painted later Japanese porcelain owed something of its miniature-like style of finish to the well-known Satsuma faïence, which, itself, lies outside the scope of this work. For the history of this ware books dealing with Japanese pottery should be consulted.

In conclusion it should be pointed out that many Chinese glazes and decorative schemes were adopted in Japan and used with great skill and taste, but these have been described in the account of the Chinese porcelains.

COREAN WARES

Corean pottery and porcelain present us with some of those vexed, minor problems which arise naturally in any study of the arts as they are practised in a poor and backward state which comes under the tutelage, successively, of one greater, more active and civilized power and then of another. Considerable difficulty has attended the attempts that have been made to disentangle the native artistic and technical motives and methods, which should

[1] Brinkley mentions pieces of Minton and Sèvres porcelain redecorated here. *Japan and China*, Vol. VIII., p. 389, etc. His account of the Tokio decorating factories is well worth the attention of collectors of Oriental wares.

COREAN

Wine-pot
Height 12 in., diameter 7½ in.

Bowl. Wave pattern incised
Height 2⅛ in., diameter 7¼ in

Vase
Height 12 in., diameter 8½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

be regarded as intrinsically Corean, from the alien influences imported and superposed by each of the paramount powers in turn.

Chinese influence is strikingly manifest in some of the earliest Corean pottery known to us, notably in the patterns with inlaid rosettes—composed of small circles arranged in clusters of five or seven—which proclaim their kinship with the stamped patterns found on Chinese pottery of the T'ang period (618–906 A.D.), and this influence appears to have been persistent and of fundamental importance. It is quite conceivable, as has been suggested by competent authorities, that these inlaid rosette patterns may have been derived from specimens of Græco-Roman glass that had been carried across Asia, and as the T'ang pottery shows obvious marks of such remote alien styles, the idea should not be lightly dismissed as inherently improbable.

The history of every handicraft shows how far removed from the water-tight compartment stage the artistic and technical processes of these ancient peoples, whether of the East or the West, really were, even at this early period. By the peaceful development of commercial intercourse raw materials or manufactured articles were constantly transported for enormous distances, and we know that there was a regular interchange of products over all the northern land areas of the Old World between the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts. Moreover, by the settlement among alien peoples of warriors or camp followers—weary of years of nomad life—knowledge of all kinds was both quickened and communicated. These great wandering hordes of men and women—often the migration movements of a race or tribe—must, of necessity, have been self-supporting, in equipment as well as food, and so thousands

of vagrant workers of every sort passed back and forth between Europe and Asia. Such workers would resume their accustomed craft during the intervals of temporary encampment or more permanent settlement and everywhere would leave traces of their passage. This movement on the vast continental scale is comparable to the earlier clash and admixture between the peoples of the Euphrates valley and those who dwelt by the banks of the Nile. It was probably, also, as fertile in the development of cultural affinities, though it has never been so closely studied from that point of view, for its records, scattered over an immense area of inhospitable country, are so broken and imperfect that they are more difficult of access and less easy to understand.

With such considerations in our mind we may find the forms and decorations of the early Corean wares explicable, as arising from a mixture of motives and ideas derived from almost every part of the ancient world and influencing the minds of a people still in a primitive stage of development.

That the near at hand Chinese influence was, after all, strongest and most persistent, is shown at a much later date when the Corean wares of the twelfth century were compared in appearance to the old *pi-sê* (secret colour) ware of Yüeh Chou and the *new* ware of Ju-Chou.[1] Fortunately we can point to undoubted examples of these beautiful Corean glazes, which, if the comparison be reasonably accurate, throw some much needed light on the distinguishing qualities of the Chinese productions to which

[1] *Account of a Mission in Corea in* 1125, *by Hsü Ching*, who accompanied the Chinese Ambassador to Corea. See Hobson, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. I., pp. 39 and 54.

COREAN

White Bowl, with incised pattern
Height $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter $4\frac{5}{8}$ in.

White Wine-pot
Height 6 in., diameter $4\frac{5}{8}$ in.

White Box
Height $3\frac{5}{8}$ in., diameter $3\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Aubrey le Blond Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum.

they are thus likened. The glazes in question are of a pale greyish green céladon colour, and frequently show a faint tinge of blue, especially where they have run or gathered a little thicker at the base of the piece.

In this country both the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum possess a number of examples, many of which have been found in Corean tombs of the tenth century and earlier, and these display the cool, bluish to grey green tones of this type of céladon colour. The glaze has a soft, smooth surface of delicate texture which is always pleasant to the touch and free from all asperities of surface, except under the base where there are usually prominent "spur marks," or even adherent fragments of the pointed claws on which the pieces were supported during the firing.

Mr. Hobson has also drawn attention to a small group of céladon bowls, with glazes of brownish olive colour, richly decorated inside with beautiful, carved or moulded designs of bold foliage, which sometimes display the figures of boys disporting themselves amidst the flowering branches, while in addition there is a general diapering of the ground with the slightly incised "combed" patterns, which are such a feature of the Corean white pieces. He suggests that we may find in this group both the Chinese prototypes and the close imitations made by the Corean potters.[1] To select the true Corean examples from such a group of mixed specimens, would prove as nice a test of connoisseurship in these early wares as one could devise.

Of the wares which were made under the alternative influence of the Japanese there does not appear to be so

[1] Hobson, R. L. *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. I., p. 85.

much to be said, for the most characteristic examples which indicate the influence of the island Empire are connected not so much with patterns or designs, as with the prevalent use of certain types of glaze, long treasured and esteemed in both countries. Paramount among these is the dark speckled glaze, known in its many varieties as "hare's fur" or "partridge" markings, which seems to have been as highly prized, among the Coreans at this date, in connexion with the tea ceremonial, as in Japan itself. These glazes are described at length in the consideration of some of the early Chinese glazes,[1] so that it is not necessary to repeat a description of them here. One may remark, however, in passing, that there does not appear to be any sound reason for the general attribution of the specimens with large, dry and rusty-looking patches to the Corean potters. Some of these are quite as likely to be of Chinese or Japanese origin, and such a general ascription of unsuccessful pieces to the potters of one country is unscientific, to say the least of it, especially when these very potters are at the same time given credit for wares of a more advanced technique.

The idea that there was ever an important or flourishing manufacture of white porcelain in Corea should I think be abandoned. Such porcelains as were made in that country owed little, either in taste or workmanship, to native influences, and after the fifteenth century the manufacture of fine pottery of all kinds seems to have ceased and only ordinary types of common pottery, intended for purely local consumption, appear to have been made in the country.

[1] See p. 17.

1

2

PERSIAN BOWLS

1.—Height 3½ in., diameter 7⅞ in.
2.—Height 3¾ in., diameter 8¼ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHAPTER IV

PERSIAN PORCELAIN

THOUGH there has been considerable discussion as to the porcelains made in Persia, and opinion has swayed first in one direction and then in the other, there seems no reason to believe that a true porcelain, analogous to the Chinese, has at any time been made in Persia on any scale which would entitle it to attention. That the experiment may have been tried, not once but many times, would only be in keeping with the high repute of Chinese porcelain, but if so we have no records either in tradition or in the shape of specimens of even doubtful attribution. For countless centuries there was caravan traffic between the two countries, and during the early Middle Ages commercial intercourse was greatly fostered by the close political and cultural connexions between the ruling houses of Persia and of China. Raw materials of many kinds are known to have been extensively traded between the two countries, and there is ample evidence of a steady interchange of artistic manufactures as well.

Chinese porcelain was specially made for export to India and Persia, in suitable shapes and with appropriate decoration, from at least the time of the Ming emperors (1368–1643), as is proved by the existence of numerous specimens of Chinese porcelain, of fine as well as of medium quality, bearing inscriptions in Persian or Arabic lettering, and made in shapes and with decorations which proclaim their foreign destination. Conspicuous among these are

a number of large dishes with flattish rims, painted in coarse, strong cobalt blue, with designs of deer, falcons or eagles and the like, recalling the hunting scenes of the Persian illuminator. Examples of finer manufacture and decoration are to be found in the tall, spouted vessels used for serving sherbet or coffee which are modelled on typical Persian shapes. Such choice pieces as these are usually skilfully painted in a soft greyish blue of silvery quality, and they take high rank among the examples of their period.

The Chinese emperor Wan-Li (1573–1619) is reputed to have sent an extensive collection of blue and white porcelains to Jehangir, the Mogul ruler of India, which remained in the palace at Agra until it was looted by the Mahrattas in 1771, and many typical specimens of the late Ming porcelains have been brought to Europe from the Indian peninsula, from Ceylon and from Persia.

Among the species of pottery which are undoubtedly of Persian origin, there is a very delicate, translucent white ware which can only be described as a fine imitative or artificial porcelain. This beautiful substance is believed to have been compounded of a washed white pipe-clay and glass, and is therefore more analogous to the later European soft porcelains than to Chinese porcelain. Much of this delicately beautiful waxen ware was imported into Europe through various channels, mostly, perhaps, by the Venetian and Genoese traders with the Levant, and may be regarded as the starting point of all the soft-paste porcelains of Italy, France, Spain and England, so that it had, indeed, a wondrous progeny. This Persian porcelain was brought to England, along with the Chinese and Japanese porcelains, by way of the English

PERSIAN

Spouted Ewer
Height 6 in., diameter $3\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Dish
Diameter $9\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Bottle
Height $5\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

trading station at Gombron on the Persian Gulf, and, in consequence, is often described as "Gomron" or "Gombroon ware" in old English account books and inventories.

The body of this Persian porcelain, where it is left exposed on the foot, is somewhat gritty to the touch and readily crumbles before a file. The glaze, which shows a faint creamy or greenish tinge when the piece is held up to the light, presents a soft waxy surface, very pleasant to the touch, but it has generally been rubbed or scratched by use. The British Museum possesses some choice specimens, but the ware can be most fully studied, in all its varieties, in the Persian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where there is the finest and most extensive collection of Persian porcelain in Europe.

The surviving examples are usually large saucers, cups or bowls and tazzas, often very thin in the walls and perfectly plain. One of the most characteristic styles of decoration is carried out by "piercing," arranged either as simple waved lines, or in groups of perforations producing radiating forms like flower petals or stars. Sometimes these perforations are left open, but usually they are filled with glaze, which then shows the greenish tint most strongly, so that it looks like pale aquamarines set in the orifices. Other examples bear soft and delicate flutings and wavy lines incised in the paste, and in addition some beautiful specimens are decorated with coloured grounds, either a delicate underglaze green, which at the first glance looks like a bright pale céladon, or a bright and limpid cobalt blue, often richly patterned with pale greenish silver lustre, or with a brownish copper lustre,

both of which are frequently rather thin and pale from wear in use.

It would, perhaps, be helpful, in passing, to mention the Persian and Syrian pottery, finely decorated with rich floral patterns in black under a bright turquoise or green glaze, which had such a pronounced influence on the art of the Chinese potter at least as early as the time of the first Ming emperors.[1] Specimens of these wares, however similar they may appear in shape and decorative style, can be readily distinguished from each other by the nature of the body of the piece, for while the Persian is shaped in a softish sandy body of earthenware or faïence, which feels gritty and coarse under the point of a sharp penknife, the Chinese is a true porcelain of fine hard texture and is translucent in the thinner specimens.

It surely cannot be fanciful to suggest that this Persian porcelain with its softness and tenderness of texture and decoration typifies the dreamy, poetic and imaginative nature of the Persian intellect, which is in such marked contrast with the noble grandeur of the Greek or the Chinese mind which always displays a reserved, stern and eminently practical character. All the arts as practised in Persia serve to reflect the same essential spirit, and the work of the Persian potter, whether in his rich, painted faïence or in his delicate porcelain, has contributed more appropriate decorative ideas to his fellow-craftsmen of other races than were ever derived from the study of Greek vases, which, from the rebirth of classicism in Europe about the middle of the eighteenth century, have weighed like a veritable " old man of the sea " on the shoulders of English,

[1] See p. 24.

PERSIAN

Pierced Bowl
Height $3\frac{5}{8}$ in., diameter $8\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Tazza
Height $4\frac{1}{8}$ in., diameter $7\frac{5}{8}$ in.

French and German potters alike. One is almost tempted to say that one Græco-Roman vase of glass, the famous Portland or Barberini Vase in the Gem Room of the British Museum, has wrought more evil, in misleading the footsteps of modern European potters, than will be undone in another hundred years, while all along the truly appropriate decorative pottery of the Middle East has been awaiting due recognition and honour.

CHAPTER V

ITALIAN PORCELAIN

WHEN we recall the extensive trading relations which existed for many centuries during the Middle Ages between Venice, Genoa and the other great mercantile cities of northern Italy, and the Levant, and the adventurous, lengthy journeys made by Italian merchants and travellers, some of whom, like Marco Polo, penetrated to the Pacific coasts by way of Persia and China, it might seem remarkable if the earliest European attempts to manufacture a translucent species of pottery had not originated in Italy. Unfortunately our knowledge of these beginnings is still fragmentary and incomplete, but the first hints of a European porcelain centre round a glassy ware said to have been made at Venice in 1519—the pre-eminence of the manufacture of glass in Venetia lends countenance to such a suggestion—and, considerably later, at Ferrara, under the patronage of Alfonso II. This prince, who was the patron of Tasso, the Italian poet, was noted for his encouragement of artists and alchemists, so that it would be natural for him to direct experiments for the discovery of porcelain, a subject of eager curiosity at the time. No specimens of these porcelains are now to be identified, so that we are deprived of the best means of judging the nature of the wares or the methods of manufacture. That porcelain of some kind was made is scarcely open to doubt, for its qualities and appearance were too well known by this time, in Europe, for any species of majolica or other enamelled

ITALIAN: CAPO DI MONTE

Height 14½ in., width 14 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

pottery to have been confounded with it. Nevertheless, despite a good deal of laborious research, documentary and otherwise, by scholars, museum curators, and other students, no specimens of such porcelains are now to be identified even by the most sanguine of those who have engaged in the search.

Fortunately it is quite otherwise with the beautiful soft porcelain made at Florence, under the direct patronage of Francesco Maria, second Grand Duke of Tuscany. This prince had an absolute passion for the pursuits of alchemy and encouraged many travelling adepts to work for him, so that we need not wonder that the famous Medicean or Florentine porcelain was invented during his reign (1574–87). This renowned and delicate porcelain was of the artificial or glassy type, for, apart from its characteristic appearance and quality,[1] there is in existence an account of its manufacture, which shows that it was composed of mixtures of impure china clay (terra di Vicenza), fine white sand and powdered glass, and resembled the typical Persian porcelain already described. The decorations, which are generally executed in a soft and tender cobalt blue (under-glaze), are either in the style of Italian arabesques or floral designs with animal figures reminiscent of Persian ornament, which has caused some writers to hazard the conjecture that the porcelain may have been made and decorated by Persian potters and painters working at Florence in the laboratory workshops of the Grand Duke. Certainly the quality of the material, as well as the style of some of the painting, definitely connects the Medicean porcelain with

[1] The specimens of this Medicean porcelain in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, together with those in the Louvre Museum in Paris, comprise most of the authentic examples that survive, and they are, fortunately, accessible to all students.

the work of the Nearer, rather than that of the Farther East. It is certain that this famous porcelain indicates the direct channel by which the connexion between the glassy Persian porcelain and the related wares of France, England and other western European countries was established; and, apart from its technical and artistic interest, the Medicean porcelain will always be famous because it occupies this interesting and important historical position.

This interesting experimental porcelain—for in itself it is hardly more than that—seems to have had less influence in Italy than it had in France, for there is a long interval between its appearance and the next attempt of which we have definite record. The scene shifts back again to Venice, where Francesco Vezzi with the aid of workers from Saxony, using, it is said, imported German materials such as they were already accustomed to, made a hard-paste porcelain, in addition to making soft porcelain. This factory probably dates from 1719, as the arcanist Hunger, who had run away from the Meissen factory and afterwards worked at Vienna, appears to have lived in Venice from 1720 to 1725, and he is said to have been concerned in the Vezzi enterprise. The factory seems to have been closed about 1740 so that it cannot have been of great importance. Few examples of its wares can now be identified, and such as are known resemble an inferior German porcelain, decorated mainly in the Chinese style, with small scenes and figures in black and gold or indifferent enamel colours and gold.

Another small factory was founded, according to a decree of the Senate, dated March 18, 1758, by a Saxon workman named Hewelche and his wife, but it cannot have met with success as it was closed in 1763, and its

ITALIAN

CAPO DI MONTE

Cup and Cover. Modelled vine
Height 4⅜ in., diameter 3 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

DOCCIA

Écuelle with Cover
Height 4¾ in., diameter 7¼ in.

CAPO DI MONTE

Group
Height 5 in., width 4½ in.

productions cannot have been important for they are now but little known.

Giminiano Cozzi made much better porcelain. His ware, which contained Vicenza clay, is whiter and the pieces are better made. In addition to tea and coffee services, notable for excellent solid gilding, glazed and biscuit porcelain statuettes were also made. The factory is believed to have been at work from 1764 to 1812, and Cozzi appears to have received a monthly allowance of 30 ducats from the State, in aid of his enterprise and in consideration of the reputation it was supposed to bring to the Venetian State. The venture apparently came to an end with the French occupation of Venice, or shortly afterwards, and was never revived.

At Le Nove, near Bassano, and formerly Venetian territory, a majolica factory had been at work for some time, certainly from the first quarter of the eighteenth century, under Giovanni Battista Antonibon, and a soft-paste porcelain of good quality was also made at this factory, at least as early as 1762, when the works was in the hands of Pasquale Antonibon, as appears by his application to the Venetian Senate in that year.[1] To what extent his manufacture of porcelain was successful we cannot now say, but it continued to as late a date as 1825, so that it must have struggled through the troubles of the Napoleonic wars.

Treviso, also in Venetian territory, had a porcelain factory in the hands of the brothers Giuseppe and Andrea Fontebasso from the later years of the eighteenth century to at least 1831, for there are pieces in existence bearing that date. The ware appears to have been a magnesian

[1] See Drake's *Venetian Ceramics*, pp. 32–4.

hybrid porcelain like some other of the Italian productions. It is generally marked with the name "Treviso" and various makers' initials.

A very similar porcelain was made at Vinovo, near Turin, from 1776 to 1815. This factory was started by one Brodel, with the help of Pierre Antoine Hannong, one of the famous family of Strasburg potters whose various members had a hand in so many ventures, but it soon passed into the hands of Dr. Gioanetti, who carried it on until his death, when the enterprise was abandoned. Like the other magnesian porcelains it has a yellowish, waxen appearance and is light in substance. This ware is generally marked with a cross within a V, and the later pieces also bear the letters D G, the initials of Dr. Gioanetti.[1]

There was a small factory in Rome, founded by G. Volpato in 1790, which is chiefly remembered for its biscuit porcelain figures, after Canova and other sculptors, as well as copies from the antique. This potter died in 1803, but the works existed to about 1830. A few sculptors' or modellers' names are found incised, the best known signature, however, being *G. Volpato, Roma.*

One of the most celebrated Italian porcelain factories of the eighteenth century was that established at Capo di Monte, near Naples, by the Bourbon Prince Charles, Duke of Parma, who became King of Naples and Sicily in 1735. This is another princely personage who is said to have worked in his own porcelain factory, and the fact that his wife was Princess Amelia of Saxony may have brought him encouragement in this pursuit. At all events the work was carried on in a style of princely magnificence,

[1] Brongniart published in *Traité des Arts Céramiques*, Vol. II., pp. 421–3, an account of this porcelain communicated to him by Dr. Gioanetti in 1807.

ITALIAN: MEDICÉAN

Flask with Two Necks
Height 6 in., diameter 3½ in.

Dish
Diameter 9⅝ in.

Bottle with Two Ring Handles
Height 6⅞ in., diameter 4½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

and the examples made here, as well as the later but similarly elaborate pieces made at Buen Retiro, in Madrid, after he became King of Spain in 1759, are among the most costly and technically perfect porcelains of the eighteenth century. The ware, however, was not a typical German porcelain at all, but a beautiful soft-paste, resembling that made at Vincennes, with which it was contemporary, and, like many of the early porcelains, it was generally moulded in high relief. In fact, relief moulding is one of the pronounced features of the ware, both at Capo di Monte and at Buen Retiro.

Following upon the transfer to Spain, the remainder of the Capo di Monte models, moulds and workpeople was re-established at Portici, and ultimately at Naples, by Ferdinand, the son of Prince Charles, but as he is said to have been of rude and boorish tastes, and State affairs appear to have been managed by his wife, Queen Caroline, a daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, she was probably the re-founder and protectrix of the factory. With this change of influence and oversight a radical alteration took place in the decorative styles that were mainly followed. The neo-classical revival was in its first stages and, perhaps naturally, it was adopted at Naples to the exclusion of the earlier styles which had made the porcelain of Capo di Monte famous. Some of the examples, based on the shapes of antique vases, bear paintings of figures in local costume, or paintings of local scenery. Such productions cannot be said to add anything of interest to the decorative treatment of porcelain; on the contrary, they mark the beginnings of one of the most unfortunate influences in the styles of shape and decoration adopted for the most elaborate European porcelains. With varying fortunes the factory

was continued to 1807, when the internal difficulties of the State brought about a demand for retrenchment, and it was sold to a company in whose hands it lingered on, not very successfully, to end finally in 1820. The moulds and models were bought by the Ginori family and removed to their works at Doccia, where they continued to do duty for many years longer; and one may look for the reappearance of pieces made in the old style any day.

ITALIAN

VINOVO

Two-handled Cup with Saucer. Rose pink and grey-blue forget-me-nots with gilding. (About 1785)

Cup—Diameter 2¾ in.

British Museum.

CAPO DI MONTE

Figure of "Plenty." (About 1755)

Height 8⅕ in.

Fortnum Bequest.

VENICE

Cup, with arms of Pope Benedict XIII (1724–30)

Diameter 3¼ in.

CHAPTER VI

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

THE transplanted Italian porcelain brought to Spain, when Charles III left Naples to assume the Spanish crown in 1759, was handsomely re-established in a Royal factory, known as "La China," at Buen Retiro, near Madrid, and is consequently known as "Buen Retiro Porcelain." This new factory was in operation by 1760, so that little time had been lost in the transfer from Italy to Spain. The first director was an Italian, Bonicelli, who had been able to bring with him many of the best workmen from the Capo di Monte factory, which accounts for a certain similarity between the early Buen Retiro pieces and those of the Neapolitan factory. The situation of the new factory, in the park surrounding one of the Royal residences, enabled its operations to be conducted with great secrecy,[1] as it was the intention to reserve the porcelain solely for use in the Royal residences, or for the customary Royal gifts to courtiers, statesmen and foreign princes. Expense does not seem to have been considered in bringing this Royal ware to the perfection aimed at, and a profusion of large and ornate vases was made, some of them being 6 to 7 feet high, and filled with modelled porcelain flowers delicately or richly painted, after the style of the famous porcelain bouquets of Vincennes which at this period were

[1] Charles Townsend wrote in 1786: "I tried to obtain admission to the china manufacture, which is likewise administered on the King's account, but his Majesty's injunctions are so severe, that I could neither get introduced to see it, nor meet with anyone who had ever been able to procure that favour for himself."

all the rage and were imitated at every important factory in Europe.

Other specimens of these large vases bore tall, pyramidal covers in elaborate open-work, smothered in modelled naturalistic flowers, and many of them are mounted in ormolu in the approved French fashion. In consequence of the variety of motives adopted, the Buen Retiro porcelain reflects the most extravagant and *outré* fashions of the contemporary French, German and Italian porcelains. The best, or one ought to say the most renowned, productions were the round or shaped plaques and slabs of porcelain used for lining the walls of some of the smaller apartments in the Royal palaces. Two such "porcelain cabinets," as they are called, still exist—one at the Royal retreat at Aranjuez, some 30 miles south of Madrid, and the other in the Royal palace at Madrid—which are striking examples of the pronounced Spanish "rococo" taste of the period, though it seems unfair to speak of them as distinctively Spanish, remembering the varied foreign influences that brought them into being. In these rooms, porcelain panels covered with figures in high relief, modelled by the Italian Gricci, alternate with large mirrors framed in porcelain slabs bearing modelled fruit and flowers, and recalling the work of the Della Robbia, though here the style is typical of the eighteenth century and quite unmistakable.

After the death of Charles III, in 1789, the porcelain was, for the first time, offered for public sale, but the high prices demanded proved practically prohibitive, and the ware is rarely to be met with in private collections even in Spain.

An apparent effort to meet the changed conditions is denoted by the manufacture, from this time, of a cheaper magnesian porcelain resembling those of northern Italy.

SPANISH: BUEN RETIRO (late 18th or early 19th Century)

Milk-jug
Height 6¼ in., diameter 3⅞ in.

Ariadne and Panther
Height 12¾ in.

Milk-jug. Blue ground with white enamel and gold
Height 6¾ in., diameter 3⅛ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

In style and decoration these later pieces bear a close likeness to those of contemporary Sèvres, though they are generally smaller and less elaborate. An explanation of this may be found in the statement that two Frenchmen, Vivien and Victor Perche, were brought from Paris to superintend the new departure.

The works was sacked and completely destroyed, in 1812, in the desperate fighting between the French and English which went on all round Madrid, and the enterprise never seems to have been revived.

The usual Buen Retiro mark is a fleur de lys in blue, though this has been used at so many factories that it is not very distinctive, and the best means of identification lies in the style of the decoration.

Ferdinand VII on his restoration in 1816 re-founded "La China," removing the factory to a site at La Moncloa, a villa once belonging to the Alva family, overlooking a gorge of the Manzanares, where work was continued down to 1849; elaborate and costly decorations with much figure-painting and gilding were generally used, but such productions were rapidly becoming *démodé* and the later doings of the factory seem to have attracted no attention outside Spain itself. We cannot wonder at this, for a fresh spirit was at work in European porcelain generally, and such lingering survivals of abandoned styles met with scant patronage, while many European princes felt themselves too insecure to indulge in fresh extravagances.

The remaining porcelains made in the Peninsula are of very minor importance, and can only be mentioned in a general history such as this. Alcora, which is best known for its faïence factory, dating from 1750, seems to have also sent out a little soft-paste porcelain, of which we

have but scanty information. There is a milk-jug, decorated with painted roses in inferior purplish rose colour, which is in the Ceramic Museum at Sèvres, and there are two or three with and without the "A" mark in the Victoria and Albert Museum from the Riaño and Joicey Collections which may serve for reference. The body of the ware is of very ordinary quality and has a greyish yellow colour, bearing an ordinary porcelain glaze of rather inferior quality. Most authorities mention figures as a speciality of the factory, but they cannot have been of particular merit or importance.

The only Portuguese porcelain factory of which there seems to be any record was founded by the Pinto-Basto family, at Vista Alegre, near Oporto, in 1790. Its productions must have possessed little importance either in quality or quantity, as they are seldom met with. The best known examples consist entirely of dinner and tea or coffee services, rather gaudily decorated with coloured grounds and flower-painting in poorish enamel-colours, mostly varieties of the gold rose colours, and with fairly elaborate gilding. Such specimens are in a hard-paste porcelain of very ordinary quality both in body and glaze.

The mark generally attributed to this factory is "V A" with or without a crown painted in gold or in various enamel-colours, though Jacquemart has the naïve remark that this mark is so rare that the actual proprietors of the factory have never seen it. Both M. Auscher, the French expert, and Mr. Hobson give the mark as it is described here, and after many years of close association and co-operation with them I have the utmost reliance on their accuracy. There is a specimen with this mark in the Victoria and Albert Museum which must be accepted as authentic.

SPANISH: BUEN RETIRO
(late 18th or early 19th Century)

Vase, with handles and cover in ormolu; gilt and painted
Height 23¾ in., diameter 9 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHAPTER VII

THE PORCELAINS OF FRANCE

MANY incidental references to various famous French porcelains have already been made in the foregoing account of the porcelains of Italy, Spain and Portugal, for it was France which, by a long course of experiment, carried on in many princely or Royal establishments and, supported in the most lavish manner through every discouragement and temporary failure, definitely and finally produced a porcelain which might fairly challenge comparison with the Oriental. The alchemists, wandering arcanists and glass-makers, who had in the mass caused immense sums to be lavished on experiments that seem to us almost childish, produced little, with all their efforts, but various kinds of opaque glass, which bore some superficial resemblance to porcelain but had little of its enduring quality of substance or true play of surface reflection, which is so mellow and subtle as almost to defy imitation in any material of which fine white clay is not an integral constituent.

The high esteem in which porcelain was held in Europe as well as the mystery which enshrouded its manufacture, coupled with grotesque legends relating to its fabrication in the Far East emanating from travellers who were supposed to have visited the porcelain kilns at work there, all combined to render it an object worthy of emulation. From the middle of the seventeenth century there were merchants in Paris who dealt in Oriental porcelain, and a collection already existed in the Palace of Versailles,

which was largely increased when the ambassador from Siam delivered numerous presents of Oriental products sent by the King of Siam to Louis XIV and some of the principal French princes and nobles, in 1686. Specimens of Oriental porcelain formed a notable part of this offering, and some of these are still in existence, mounted in metal mounts of the period stamped with " suns " and fleurs de lys, and identifiable from the catalogue of the Royal porcelains drawn up in the same year by the Jesuit Father Tachard. Although these specimens came by way of Siam they appear to have been the coveted Chinese porcelain, imported into that country, for it has never been contended that they were produced from Siamese kilns.

All this, coupled with accounts of the doings in other European countries which doubtless lost little in the telling, stimulated the French experimenters, but they appear to have been still working on the idea of making a milky or porcelain-like glass, rather than any form of pottery. The doings of Claude Réverend of Paris, who was granted authority to make porcelain in Paris, and in such neighbouring places as he might think suitable, in 1664, and who claimed to possess the secret of *imitating porcelain as beautiful and even more beautiful than that which comes from the East Indies*, belong to the realms of conjecture, for there appears to be no proof in existence that he ever established a factory.

ROUEN

We emerge from these shadows of conjecture in the date, 1673, when Louis Poterat, a faïence-maker of St. Sever, a suburb of Rouen, but situated on the opposite

bank of the Seine, was granted an exclusive monopoly for the fabrication of porcelain like that of China, and of faïence after the Dutch manner, for a period of thirty years. Poterat received this monopoly on the ground that he had discovered these secrets, so important for the establishment of a new industry in France, by travelling in foreign countries and by continual diligence. This grant appears to have disregarded the two earlier concessions made to Claude Réverend for the manufacture of porcelain, and to Poirel de Grandval for the manufacture of faïence in Rouen, and it is probable that these earlier grants were deliberately passed over so that the manufacture of porcelain might be developed. From an official inquiry made in 1694, when a renewal of Poterat's monopoly was sought, it would appear that this early Rouen porcelain was made at the factory of Louis Poterat and also at the factory of his father, Edmé Poterat, from 1693 by the widow of Edmé Poterat and her youngest son. Louis Poterat died unexpectedly in 1696, and the brother shortly afterwards removed the works across the river to Rouen, but the manufacture of porcelain was soon abandoned.

Only about fifty pieces of this precious porcelain of Rouen are known, and these comprise flower-pots, salt-cellars, and cups, usually decorated in underglaze blue, with "lambrequins" and characteristic French ornament, none of them apparently showing imitations of Chinese patterns. A few specimens are known bearing a polychrome decoration in blue, green and red, resembling the well-known contemporary faïence of Rouen.

Specimens of Rouen porcelain are extremely rare out-

side France, but a charming and characteristic example was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Mr. Fitzhenry, who was a famous collector of early French porcelains. This cup is illustrated in M. Auscher's "French Porcelain." [1] In France there are a few pieces in the Rouen Museum, in the Ceramic Museum at Sèvres, and elsewhere, but the most extensive collection was that of M. le Comte de Chavagnac in Paris, which has recently been sold on the death of its owner.

ST. CLOUD

St. Cloud, which long contested with Rouen the honour of the first manufacture of French porcelain, appears to have been the site of a faïence factory prior to 1670. The situation was most favourable for such an enterprise, for the necessary materials, in the shape of plastic clay and marl, chalk and sand, abound in the neighbourhood. Moreover, its proximity to the Royal or princely residences of St. Cloud, Versailles, Meudon and St. Germain was likely to attract the attention and secure for it the patronage of the highest in the land. When Louis XIV had the little palace, known as the *Trianon de Porcelaine*, built in 1670, the royal accounts for the building expenses show that the Claude Réverend, who has already been mentioned, supplied 1670 faïence vases to hold oranges and flowers; and these vases are stated to have been made at St. Cloud. M. Morin was director of the faïence factory of St. Cloud at this time, and it was some years later when Chicanneau and his sons, who are believed to have come from Rouen, brought the ware to perfection. In the pharmacy of the

[1] Auscher, E. S., *A History and Description of French Porcelain*. Cassell and Co., Ltd.

FRENCH: ST. CLOUD

Blue and White Tea-pot
Height $4\frac{3}{4}$ in., width $6\frac{5}{8}$ in.

White: Figure seated on a Rock
Height $8\frac{7}{8}$ in.

Posset-pot and Cover. Painted in green enamel-colours with figures in purplish-brown robes
Height $5\frac{1}{4}$ in., diameter 4 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

hospital at Versailles there is still preserved a complete set of drug pots, richly decorated with blue patterns outlined in black, and boldly labelled with the names of the common drugs and simples of the period.[1] More than twenty years later, in 1696, letters patent were granted by Louis XIV to " Barbe Coudray, widow of Pierre Chicanneau, and Jean-Baptiste, Pierre and Geneviève Chicanneau, children of the mentioned Coudray and the mentioned Pierre Chicanneau, and undertakers of the faïence and porcelain works established at St. Cloud " on account of described inventions in the manufacture of faïence and porcelain. The letters patent go on to refer to the privilege previously granted to the Sieur de Saint-Etienne (the territorial designation of Louis Poterat) to found a works at Rouen, but state that: " as he had only approached the secret and never carried it to such perfection as was now attained at St. Cloud, and as, since his death neither his wife nor anybody belonging to his family had made anything in porcelain, without wronging the heirs of St. Etienne, it is possible to grant the monopoly to St. Cloud, as much for the good quality as for the beauty and perfection of the porcelain made by Chicanneau."

The oft-quoted account of the early St. Cloud porcelain written by Dr. Martin Lister (afterwards physician to Queen Anne), who accompanied the Duke of Portland to Paris when he was sent to negotiate the Treaty of Ryswick, reflects contemporary opinion as to its merits.

He says: " I saw the potterie of St. Clou, with which

[1] Auscher, E. S., *La Céramique au Château de Versailles sous le règne de Louis XIV.* Amateurs who have not visited the pharmacy of the hospital at Versailles will find much of the greatest interest in the pharmacy-jars there, and also in some jars of Chinese porcelain in the same room.

I was marvellously well pleased, for I confess I could not distinguish betwixt the pots made there and the finest Chinaware I ever saw. It will, I know, be easily granted me that the painting may be better designed and finished (as indeed it was) because our men are far better masters of that art than the Chineses; but the glazing came not in the least behind theirs, not for whiteness, nor the smoothness of running without bubbles. Again, the inward substance and matter of the pots was, to me, the very same, hard and firm as marble, and the selfsame grain on this side vitrification. Farther the transparency of the pots the very same. . . . I did not expect to have found it in this perfection, but imagined this might have arrived at the Gomron ware, which is, indeed, little else but a total vitrification; but I found it far otherwise and very surprising, and which I account part of the felicity of the age to equal, if not surpass, the Chineses in their finest art. They sold these pots at St. Clou at excessive rates, and for their ordinary chocolate cups askt crowns a-piece. They had arrived at the burning on gold in neat chequere works. He had sold some tea equipages at 100 livres a sett. There was no moulding or model of Chinaware which they had not imitated, and had added many fancies of their own, which had their good effects and appeared very beautiful."[1] 'Tis much to be hoped that Dr. Lister's medical knowledge was greatly in advance of his knowledge of porcelain!

Another notice of the factory, in similar eulogistic terms, appeared in "Le Mercure Galant," October, 1700, giving an account of a visit paid by Madame la Duchesse

[1] *Account of a Journey to Paris in the Year* 1698, Dr. Martin Lister. London, 1699.

de Bourgogne in September, 1700, and mentioning the MM. Chicanneau as the proprietors.

Shortly after this, in 1702, a fresh privilege to continue the factory for ten years was granted, and in another grant of ten years in 1712 we find the first mention of Henri Trou. This person, who was Usher of the Antechamber to the Duc d'Orléans, married, in 1698, Barbe Coudray, the relict of the elder Chicanneau, and had been enrolled in the Company of Master Enamellers, Glass and Faïence Makers in 1706. Possibly the third grant of a privilege was due to the influences thus secured, as the formula of the grant runs that the King decides " after the opinion of his dear and beloved uncle, the Duc d'Orléans." The Duc d'Orléans had a laboratory where he studied physics and alchemy, still a fashionable fad, and where, at a later date, the experimental manufacture of hard porcelain was carried on.

After 1722 there must have been some disagreement between the members of the different families. The Trous carried on the factory at St. Cloud, while Marie Moreau, relict of the younger Pierre Chicanneau, had a factory in Paris, (Faubourg St. Honoré), and there was a third factory in the St. Antoine district, as we read in an account written by Réaumur the chemist in 1739, when he was at work on the problem of the devitrification of glass, and entitled " *Manière de transformer le verre en une espèce de porcelaine appelée du nom de son auteur porcelaine de Réaumur.*" He says : " Is it not enough for a porcelain that is going to be so cheap if its whiteness is superior to that of our usual porcelains that are made in the Faubourg St. Antoine ; if it is just as beautiful as that of the porcelain of St. Cloud ; and finally, if its whiteness is not inferior, or is even superior,

to that of most Indian porcelain ?" The privilege for the St. Cloud factory was extended in 1742 for another twenty years, but the efforts of the families of Chicanneau and Trou were largely spent in legal squabbles, and perhaps on this account, or because of a fire which is said to have destroyed the buildings in 1773, nothing further is heard of the once famous factory.

The body of the St. Cloud porcelain has a fine and regular grain, but the colour has a yellow cast especially when viewed by transmitted light. The glaze is bright and clear, generally free from imperfections, for it is seldom blistered, though it sometimes shows dull patches or touches, especially on flat surfaces, due to imperfect firing in the enamel kiln.

The forms of the pieces embrace most of those in vogue at the time, and are generally found either left in the white glaze or, more usually, painted with patterns, in underglaze blue of good quality, of arabesques and borders arranged so as to display the modelling of the pieces to the best advantage. Rarely one finds on the St. Cloud porcelain patterns in which the underglaze blue pattern is enriched with enamel-colours—green, red, yellow, purple and a blackish brown. Exceptionally pieces were covered with a fairly thin layer of a soft yellowish green enamel in imitation of the much prized céladon.

The recently introduced fashion of drinking chocolate, tea and coffee, which only came into vogue after 1650, created the demand for cups and saucers, tea-pots, and coffee- or chocolate-pots, and as all these luxuries came from the East, the potters naturally turned to the same source for the models of such novelties. Oriental shapes were either copied or slightly adapted, and at first Oriental designs

FRENCH

PARIS: RUE THIROUX

Cup and Saucer
Diameters 2½ in. and 5 in.

Franks Collection, British Museum.

MENNECY

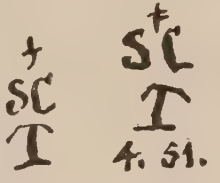
Group of Child Musicians. White
Height 7¼ in.

ST. CLOUD

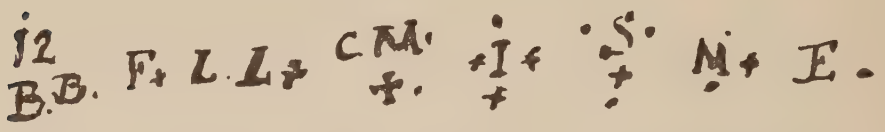
Sugar Bowl, with applied sprays of prunus. White
Height 4 in., diameter 3¾ in.

were copied too, but these were soon displaced, to a certain extent, by the dainty "lambrequins" or scalloped patterns, and other ornament in pure French taste, often very skilfully disposed and painted. One might imagine such a mixture of styles producing decorative horrors, but no little taste and skill are generally manifest, and the final result is usually pleasant and agreeable. Another skilful addition of French ideas is to be seen in the soft and delicate "fluting" and other simple modelling generally used, indeed it is seldom absent, and the fine pieces with imbricated ornament resembling a sheath of artichoke or lotus leaves encircling the base, or base, neck and cover, are highly characteristic. Such examples are often found mounted with silver-gilt, and choice specimens may be seen in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Wallace Collection at Hertford House.

The earliest mark appears to have been "a sun with rays" impressed in the paste, and this mark is often supposed to distinguish the pieces made in the reign of Louis XIV, and was presumably the Royal emblem; pieces bearing this mark are generally of the finest quality. Later pieces were marked in blue with the letters S C with a small cross or t above, and underneath the letter T. Numbers or detached letters are sometimes used with these letters. These are generally interpreted as "St. Cloud-Trou," while the numbers and letters are supposed to be the numbers of the pieces of different services or the painters' marks of the best decorators, especially as the essential mark is occasionally defec-



tive, and many initials are recorded, generally surrounded with little crosses, such as:



Some of these marked pieces may have been made at the decorative factories in the Faubourg St. Honoré and Faubourg St. Antoine, but this can only be a conjecture.

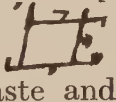
LILLE

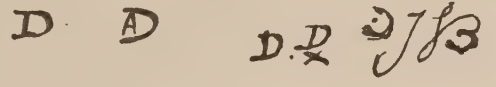
In this case the patron of the porcelain-makers was no longer a prince, but the municipal council of the town, for it is to the Mayor and Council that a petition was addressed, in 1711, when a faïence-maker, Barthélemy Dorez, of Douai, and his nephew, Pierre Pélissier, exhibited to them samples of porcelain, after the Chinese fashion, with a view to display their beauty and their hardness, and sought the right of setting up an establishment in the town where they proposed to make *porcelain* as well as faïence that they might increase the reputation of the town of Lille. The petitioners' wishes were complied with in the main, for they were granted a subvention and the entire rights for the manufacture and sale of porcelain in Lille.[1]

It is not known whether Dorez and Pélissier had acquired their knowledge by working at Rouen or St. Cloud, though that is a more likely supposition than that they were original investigators. Certainly the porcelain made

[1] The exact date of the foundation of this factory is uncertain to a few years, but they received a grant from the municipality from 1711 to 1720, so that they may have been at work from 1708, as is sometimes asserted.

at Lille presents many resemblances to the better known wares of St. Cloud, and is very like a poor relation of that famous ware. For instance, the glaze, which often runs in streaks like the St. Cloud glaze, was more liable to blister and to develop dry patches, while the painted ornament often looks dry or even "frizzled" and the painting is less skilful. There is no definite style of fabrication or decoration which can be held to distinguish the Lille porcelains, and most of the pieces attributed to Lille owe this designation to the fact that they resemble inferior examples of the porcelain of St. Cloud. Among the specimens that seem most likely to have been made at Lille, there are examples of tea, coffee and dinner ware, toilet-vases, perfume-burners, flower-vases, and a few statuettes and enamelled busts.

The marks generally supposed to indicate productions of this early Lille factory consist of the letter L in various forms, either painted in blue or scratched in the paste, a most uncertain means of identification, while there is a square mark in blue  which passes for an anagram of Lille. Also certain letters or monograms scratched in the paste and interpreted as being F B to indicate François and Barthélemy Dorez, D D..J B.



CHANTILLY (1725–1800)

This famous works, where some of the most charming and precious of the earlier French porcelains were made, was founded under the patronage and at the charges of Louis-Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, and its first

director was Ciquaire Cirou, a skilful potter, who may have practised the art at St. Cloud, for the biscuit of the earlier productions seems practically identical with that of St. Cloud, though the glaze was entirely different, for instead of the transparent and limpid glaze of the latter, the earlier Chantilly glaze is identical with the tin enamels used on the contemporary faïences of Nevers, Rouen, etc. How long the use of this tin enamel lasted we do not know, for the examples are rarer than those with a transparent lead glaze, which is said to have been introduced by Cirou about 1735. In all probability the use of the two glazes went on side by side for some years at least, though the transparent glaze ultimately triumphed to meet the competition set up by the factory at Mennecy, and that at Vincennes and finally at Sèvres.

When the factory was first started the Prince de Condé was making his famous collection of Japanese porcelains, specializing apparently in those of Imari, which are generally known as "Kakiyemon" after their famous inventor, and with which we have already dealt.[1]

These dainty "Kakiyemon" patterns with their ornamental flowering sprays, detached flowers and little birds or quaint monsters, painted in deft touches of red, yellow and blue, heightened with gold used sparingly, set a fashion in Europe which lasted for many years, for in addition to those of Chantilly, which are the most charming, they had been largely used at Meissen from about 1720, and were afterwards used on the porcelain of Vincennes and on the English porcelains of Bow, Chelsea and Worcester.

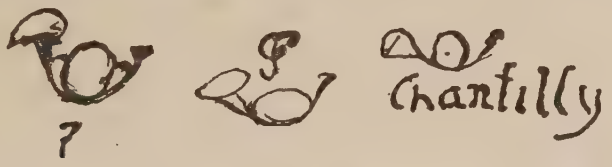
The stanniferous glaze of the early Chantilly porcelain, of which we have already spoken, was admirably adapted

[1] See p. 98.

to this charming "borrowed" style of decoration, and it would often be difficult to distinguish the French from the Japanese examples, but that the softer Chantilly glaze is now worn and rubbed as the other would not be.

Apparently after about 1735 Cirou introduced a transparent lead glaze, as has been said, and the practice was continued by his successors, who were: Buquet de Mont-Vallier and de Roussière (1751–54); Buquet de Mont-Vallier alone (1754–60); Pierre Peyrard (1760–76); Louis-François Gravant (1776–79); Madame Gravant (1779–81); d'Antheaume de Surval (1781–92); Christopher Potter (1792–1800), who is said to have been a rich Englishman, already owning factories at Montereau and Forges-les-Eaux, and is reputed to have expended his fortune in these unsuccessful ventures; at all events he gave up the works here in 1800. Afterwards they appear to have been carried on for a few years by Baynal and Lallement, but little is known of their doings, and how, or exactly when, they died out.

The marks generally take the form of a hunting-horn



incised in the paste, or in onglaze red which is often rather dry of surface.

MENNECY-VILLEROY

This factory was started about 1735 under the patronage of Louis-François de Neufville de Villeroy, Duc de Villeroy, by a potter named Barbin, or Babin, who is said to have

worked without the necessary letters patent, relying on the protection of this powerful noble to shield him from the troubles which usually befell those who established a manufacture without due authorization.

The first productions of this factory of which specimens can now be identified resemble the wares of St. Cloud, for they have a yellowish cast, but the glaze is uneven and streaked, and the immaturity of the work is manifest even to a casual observer.

Considerable light was thrown on the productions of Mennecy by excavations on the site of the factory, conducted by M. Aymé Darblay,[1] on whose land the works had been situated. Here a number of knife-handles were found, with patterns in underglaze blue, like those of the well-known "lambrequins" of the faïence and porcelain of Rouen; but the interested reader must be referred to M. Darblay's volume for further information.

Other early productions in addition to the knife-handles mentioned are handles for walking-canes and sun-shades, and little boxes to be mounted in silver-gilt for fashionable use as snuff-boxes, patch-boxes and bonbonnières. In addition to underglaze blue, the patterns on these pieces are frequently gay with bright enamel-colours—red, green, blue and yellow, and good gilding, though this last is rare. Somewhat later an opaque glaze was also used for the manufacture of pieces in the style of Chantilly, though they are not equal in style or finish to these fine productions.

Among other specimens that are known we must mention small vases for flowers and for toilette use, a few perfume-

[1] Darblay, Aymé, *Mennecy-Villeroy*. Paris, 1901.

FRENCH: MENNECY

White Tea-pot. Painted in colours
Height 3¾ in., diameter 3⅛ in.
J. S. Joicey Bequest.

Modelled Group. White, painted
Height 9½ in., width of base 6 in.
Fitzhenry Gift.

White Tea-pot. Painted in colours
Height 4¼ in., diameter 3¼ in.
Fitzhenry Gift.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

burners, cups and saucers, sugar-boxes and tea-pots, but table ware in the shape of plates and dishes is rare and is seldom to be seen except in private collections or in museums. A few of the popular "magots" or grotesque Chinese figures are also known, as well as a number of small statuettes and groups, which are frequently left white, sometimes in the biscuit state, but more generally are coloured. The biscuit statuettes are of a fine grained porcelain with a markedly yellow tint, and usually have the letters D V incised in the paste. The mark incised in the paste is sometimes accompanied by other incised letters, which may be artist's marks, and occasionally a date—1767, etc. The general mark of the factory consists of the same letters D V in

various forms of script, occasionally surmounted by a coronet, and surrounded by roughly drawn scrolls in various colours—red and blue being commoner, though black, green and brown marks are also known.

BOURG-LA-REINE (1773–1806)

We are without exact information as to how Jacques, a Parisian sculptor, and Jullien, one of the best painters from the Mennecy factory, were allowed to start a soft-paste porcelain factory at this little place near Sceaux (Île de France) in 1773. They are believed to have worked under the protection of the Comte d'Eu, and the pieces made here bear a close resemblance to those of Mennecy, as we might expect. Indeed, unless the pieces are dis-

tinctively marked, it is almost impossible to distinguish between them; and the temporary success of this little factory shows how popular the style was. The restrictions on the use of gold are doubtless responsible for the fact that the pieces are usually edged with a line of rose colour. Why the factory, having survived the Revolution, should have come to an end in 1806 is unknown, but doubtless the fixed determination of Napoleon to revive and extend the glories of Sèvres caused this and other factories to be abandoned in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

The usual factory mark is the letters B R incised in

the paste; while in addition there are found on the rare modelled figures, which are usually in biscuit, the incised letters M O, believed to be the monogram of the sculptors and modellers, Jean-Baptiste, or Christopher Mo, who are known to have worked at Mennecy, and who probably accompanied Jullien when he left Mennecy to start this factory.

SCEAUX (1749–95)

This celebrated centre for the production of enamelled faïence and porcelain is situated in the Île de France near the little town of Sceaux, where the Duchesse du Maine held her court at the château. In 1748, De Bey, an architect who was also interested in the making of pottery, and Jacques Chapelle, one of the universal geniuses of the time who

boasted of having mastered the technical secrets of the chief European porcelain factories, formed a company for the manufacture of porcelain, possibly in reliance on the interest of the Duchesse du Maine. A spacious building was devoted to this purpose and equipped with the necessary kilns, workshops and appliances. But they were interdicted from manufacturing porcelain at this time, as they were reminded of the Royal privilege granted to Charles Adam (probably one of the Hannongs from Strasburg who were mixed up with many of these early enterprises), who was acting as the ostensible figure-head of a number of personages of importance who did not wish their names to appear publicly. Their first productions, therefore, were in a fine species of faïence to which they gave the name "Faïence Japonée." These works were taken under the patronage of the Duchesse du Maine, and as their situation was near the "grande route" from Versailles to Choisy-le-Roi, it was admirably suited for this purpose. This princess, however, died in 1753, but its promoters sought the protection of the Duc de Penthièvre, Grand Admiral of France, from whose arms the anchor, which so often figures among the factory marks, was derived. It is said, too, that he greatly helped the success of the factory by his support and influence, and a number of pieces from the dinner services made for him are still in existence; most of these pieces bear his arms and the name of the château where they were to be used. Either surreptitiously or openly soft-paste porcelain was produced, and the ware is of fine quality, being usually whiter and more perfectly glazed than the contemporary porcelain of Bourg-la-Reine, with which it is usually compared, though they were probably made from the same receipt and with very similar materials.

The best-known mark is the two letters S X incised in the paste, though it appears in various forms, such as:

while marks indicative of Sceaux-Penthièvre, S P incised or painted in blue, are recorded.

ARRAS (1770–90?)

A small factory existed some time during the eighteenth century, but its history is so uncertain that the dates given for its foundation range between 1711 and 1784. Whether there were two distinct ventures or merely an inexplicable mistake in dates we cannot say, but the porcelain was of poor quality, yellowish in colour and not very translucent.

The persons supposed to have been concerned in the venture were Boussemaert, a potter of Lille, and from about 1772 the names of Delahaye and the sisters Delemer, or Deleneur, are given as the responsible managers or partners. M. de Calonne, Governor of Flanders and Artois, is said to have undertaken to provide the funds, while the provincial government of Artois gave a grant from about 1773.

The porcelain in any case is of little value or importance, for it is of yellow tone and not very transparent, having a dull inferior glaze. Apparently only useful ware for the purposes of the table or the toilet were made. Most of the known pieces are decorated in underglaze blue, though some few pieces are known with enamel decorations in various colours.

FRENCH

VINCENNES

Vase. White, painted in rose-red and green
Height $4\frac{5}{8}$ in.

British Museum.

TOURNAY

Dish, with royal blue and gilding
Length $8\frac{3}{10}$ in.
Barwell Bequest.

BOISSETTE

Tea-pot
Height $4\frac{3}{8}$ in.

The usual mark is or in underglaze blue, while the second mark is also known inscribed in the paste. M. Auscher mentions a piece bearing the second mark and the inscription: "*Delemer l'an* 1771." [1]

VINCENNES (1740–55)

The princely and Royal patronage which everywhere attended the introduction or development of porcelain during the early years of the eighteenth century must have attracted the attention of the French Court, even had interested courtiers been lacking to press its claims on the Royal attention. The first definite steps in this direction appear to have been taken about 1740, when Orry de Fulvy, brother of the superintendent of Royal buildings, became interested in the doings of some vagabond workmen, the brothers Dubois, one a sculptor and the other a painter, who had worked at St. Cloud and at Chantilly, and along with another fugitive from Chantilly named Gérin, had commenced to make porcelain at Vincennes. The Marquis du Châtelet who bought some of their pieces is said to have shown them to Orry de Fulvy, who was greatly interested and he, apparently, secured, through his brother's influence, the King's permission to use some unoccupied buildings connected with the Royal château at Vincennes, and he also obtained money for them to the extent of 10,000 livres, whether his own or that of others does not appear. Another, and in the sequel more important, worker named Gravant, who is likewise supposed

[1] Auscher, E. S., *Comment Reconnaître les Porcelaines, etc.* Paris, 1907.

to have learnt the manufacture of porcelain at some other factory, was also of the company.

From a manuscript of Millot's, in the library of the Sèvres Museum, we learn that the processes were most unreliable, for at least five-sixths of the ware came from the oven imperfect, even when a whole batch was not spoiled, and this venture soon terminated, for the bankrupt partners stole away, leaving the promoters and some few faithful workers to clean up the mess as best they could. Gravant, who remained, is said to have copied all their working notes, and he prevailed on Orry de Fulvy to carry on the experiments for a time. Gravant appears to have behaved honestly to Orry de Fulvy throughout, and besides procuring other porcelain-workers from Chantilly, he bought from one Caillat, of whom we have no knowledge, the secret of making certain colours. At this date, 1741, Charles Adam is described as director or administrator, while Gravant was responsible for the bodies and glazes.

A few years of hard and uncertain work followed, but by 1745 a beautiful porcelain was manufactured with success, and Orry de Fulvy formed a company of promoters from among the financiers of the time, who were mostly connected with the *fermes*, i.e. farming of taxes, one of the ruinous methods of French finance in the eighteenth century.

It was agreed that Gravant should procure and supply the paste as well as the glazing materials, and should give a written copy of the compositions to M. de Fulvy, who was to superintend or perform the experiments. On the successful completion of the experiments, de Fulvy was to deposit with a Parisian notary a document containing the

receipts together with an undertaking that if the manufacture was successful for ten years after January 1, 1746, Gravant should then receive 24,000 livres, and in the meantime should be paid an annual sum of 1,200 livres, from 1748, by way of salary.

Another inventor or arcanist who is mentioned is the Benedictine monk Hippolyte, of the Abbey of St. Martin des Champs, from whom the secret of fixing gold on the porcelain was bought for the relatively large sum of 3,000 livres, and he was further to supply the gold as required, also at a high price.

On July 24, 1745, the King in his camp at Boost signed a privilege for the term of thirty years to one Charles Adam, for the establishment of a manufacture of porcelain *after the style of Saxon porcelain.* Extensive premises in the château of Vincennes and at Bel-Air, a little place near by, were allotted to the use of the company at the same time, and this grant indicates the direct interest of the King in the reorganized enterprise.

From this date the business made rapid progress, as men of real ability were attracted to its service. Boileau, a clerk in the office of taxes, became managing-clerk and developed into an able and ingenious financial administrator, so that in the early years at Sèvres he became a person of great importance and no little influence. The chemical work was no longer entrusted to an arcanist or master of mysteries, but was conducted by Hellot, an Academician and chemist of great repute. The modelling, which became such a feature of the porcelain, was superintended by Duplessis, a goldsmith and sculptor, while the painting and decorating were directed by an artist, Bachelier, and an enameller to the King, named Mathieu. All this ex-

penditure caused fresh demands for money, and the share capital was increased in 1746, while a further sum had to be raised in 1747, but deficits seem to have occurred regularly until finally the enterprise was adopted by the King a few years later. These financial difficulties do not seem to have led to any intermission in the work, or in the elaborate style of production that was followed.

In the memoirs of the Duc de Luynes [1] we find the following account of a little ceremony on April 13, 1748 : " M. de Fulvy, who continues to be the director of the porcelain manufactory at Vincennes, had a porcelain vase brought to the Queen, which he presented to her on behalf of the company. Three small white figures, together with a porcelain vase, were mounted on a gilt-bronze pedestal. The vase contains a bouquet of flowers also made in porcelain. M. de Fulvy told me that there were 480 flowers in the bouquet. The vase with its pedestal and the flowers stood about 3 feet high. The bronze mounting alone cost 100 louis [£94], and the porcelain just as much ; it is a perfect work of its kind—as much for the whiteness as for the execution of the small figures and the flowers. This manufactory is now superior to that of Saxony for the making of flowers."

The sale register, which happens to be preserved at Sèvres, proves that the cost was 2,600 livres, and not 2,000 as de Luynes says, but apart from this detail it is certain that the success of the present was great, as he says. The young Dauphiness Marie-Josèphe ordered a similar work as a present for her father, Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony, to demonstrate that the Vincennes porcelain

[1] *Mémoires du Duc de Luynes.* Édition Firmin Didot, II., 12.

was now equal to that of Meissen; and the famous vase was long preserved in the Johanneum at Dresden.[1]

In spite of all these technical and artistic successes, and the favour of an influential party at Court, the finances remained in an unsatisfactory state. Money had frequently to be borrowed and pressing creditors placated, so it was decided to raise fresh capital by increasing the number of shares from twenty-one to thirty, which would provide a further 126,000 livres. We gather some idea of the costs of the undertaking if we recall that the King had given a subsidy of 40,000 livres in 1747, and further sums of 30,000 livres in 1748 and 1749. A final struggle to establish things on a better financial footing was made in December, 1750, when the capital was increased to 550,000 livres, a truly immense sum.

The memoirs of the Duc de Luynes throw some light on this matter, also, for under 1749 he mentions an interview with M. de Fulvy, who told him: "There are actually nearly one hundred workmen who work at Vincennes, some of whom are paid so much a day, while others are paid by the piece. One of the great difficulties is the earth for the moulds; this earth must not be mixed with any metals for it stains the porcelain. Some of the right kind is so dry that at every firing the moulds break and cannot be used twice.[2] M. de Fulvy hopes that his manufacture, being well supported, will sell from 700,000 to 800,000 livres' worth of produce per year; about 300,000 livres' worth in France and the rest in foreign countries. They

[1] This famous vase has often been illustrated since attention was drawn to t afresh by an article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. It is well portrayed in M. Auscher's *French Porcelain*. London, Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1905.

[2] There is an evident confusion here between the plaster of Paris moulds in which so many of the pieces were shaped, and the fireclay cases or saggers in which they were fired.

have already sent pieces there with great success and many foreigners impatiently wish to buy more"—with much more of the same nature.

These were doubtless the ideas and expectations of M. de Fulvy about 1749, but such ambitious views met with a check in the unexpected death of the two brothers de Fulvy : the minister died in 1750 and the manager of Vincennes only a few months later, in 1751. Under the terms of the articles of association the company was faced with the necessity of paying out the moneys invested by the brothers and this when the financial position was only just reorganized and there were no funds in hand for such a purpose.

This unfortunate conjunction of troubles seems to have brought Vincennes to the position of a definitely Royal factory. Money was needed on all hands as we have seen and large sums were owing to the Crown which the company was quite unable to pay. After negotiations the King's Council promulgated an edict of October 8, 1752, which took away the privilege from Charles Adam, in whose name it had been originally granted, while by August 19, 1753, a fresh privilege was granted in the name of Eloi Brichard, and this became, in a way, the charter which elevated Vincennes to the rank of a Royal factory. This document as we read it now, and as it probably was intended to be read, conferred on Brichard as representing the company, the exclusive right to conduct the works and produce all kinds of porcelains painted or not painted, gilded or not gilded, plain or with modelled reliefs or flowers, and to enjoy and possess these rights and privileges to the exclusion of all others in the whole of His Majesty's obedient land and territories during twelve years and three months from

October 1, 1752. Further, all persons, whatsoever their rank or position were forbidden to make and sell porcelain, and, moreover, it was also forbidden to paint any white-paste pottery in colours. Brichard was given the right of inspecting all other pottery manufactories and even the Royal residences, and, finally, the decree reads that anyone importing porcelains from abroad was punishable with a fine of 3,000 livres and the confiscation of the porcelain.

These extraordinary powers do not appear to have been used at the time, but at a later date they were revived and extended, some time after the re-establishment of the factory at Sèvres.

Meantime, all the buildings and establishments at Vincennes were placed at the disposal of the company, and the place was declared a Royal manufactory with full rights and privileges, and on the front of the works and of the ware-rooms the words "Manufacture Royale de Porcelaine" were to be displayed. Finally all the pieces were to be marked with a double L, which was to be put on every piece except the flowers, where its use was clearly impossible. The secrets of the materials, the modelling and painting, and of the various elaborate processes of the factory were also expressly reserved to the King, and neither Brichard nor the members of the company were to have any claim or property in such knowledge or information, as the mixtures were to be prepared under the supervision of some person appointed by the King in Council. As a protection against the seduction of the workmen by tempting offers from other porcelain factories, the principal work-people and those assistants of six months' standing were granted certain privileges, which seem important under the conditions

prevailing at the time. They were freed, for instance, from the billeting of soldiers, police dues, and liabilities to service in the militia, as well as from ordinary and extraordinary taxation, while any foreign workmen who were secured were to become naturalized and entitled to the same rights. In return the painters, sculptors, modellers and others must not leave under six months' notice, while those engaged in the management or in the special processes of mixing materials for the body and glaze or in the preparation of colours and the like could not leave without express permission from the King. After all this, any who left were forbidden to seek employment in the manufacture of porcelain, and other porcelain- or faïence-makers were also forbidden to employ them in any capacity, save with express permission of the Council of State. Due penalties were prescribed for all parties infringing these Orders in Council, and at the same time the former privileges granted to other factories were revoked. In a word everything was done to protect the monopoly from competition, and the enactments in their extent and minuteness of detail are a revelation of the arbitrary powers claimed on behalf of the Crown.

Finance still remained a constant preoccupation of the management, and fresh sums were raised in 1752 when thirteen original shareholders deposited 600,000 livres, the price of sixty fresh shares, and the King subscribed 200,000 livres with the right to one quarter of the profits, so that it looks as if the original capital was written off in effect.

Fresh vitality was also derived from the accession of new artists and chemists among whom one must mention Macquer, who ultimately became so famous as a pottery

SÈVRES

Fan-shaped Flower Stand (*Jardinière en éventail*). Flowers painted by Theodore Buteux

Height 8⅜ in., length 11$\frac{5}{16}$ in., depth 6⅜ in.

Wallace Collection.

chemist. The immediate result of the association of Macquer with Hellot was seen in the introduction of many new varieties of blue, yellowish green, yellow, rose and lilac, while a great number of soft and delicate shades of rose, bright carmine, bright red, grey, green, brown and bluish tints make their appearance from this date. This, naturally, had a marked influence on the style and finish of the painting, and one feels the gradual displacement of the conventional touch of the early Vincennes painting by a more elaborate style in which the tints were softened and shaded, while stippling was often resorted to. Not later than 1749 the famous *Bleu de Roi* ground appeared: an underglaze cobalt blue so deep and rich that it was usually softened and broken by marbling the colour or spreading a network of gold tracery or diapering over its surface. About 1752 Hellot perfected the precious turquoise enamel-colour, known as "Turkish blue" or *bleu turquin*, which could never be obtained in such tender perfection on the glaze of hard porcelain, though it has since been developed perfectly on the English bone porcelains.[1]

That Hellot had grasped the fundamental idea of the precise nature of Oriental porcelain and of its constitution is obvious from his manuscripts, some of which are still preserved in the manufactory at Sèvres, and he clearly recognized that a superior clay to the pipeclay which was in general use was essential, but it was reserved for his colleague Macquer, one of the honoured names in the invention of true porcelain in France, to discover the necessary minerals in France and bring them successfully into use; but this belongs to a later period of our history. At the

[1] This fact is taken advantage of by the gentry who make a living by reproductions of the *pâte tendre* of Sèvres.

time, and probably pending the enlightenment that follows successful experiment, they were grossly unfair in denying that the Saxon porcelain was a true porcelain, similar in nature to the Chinese.

It should be stated that Duplessis, the King's goldsmith, is said to have acted as art director and he certainly designed many services, particularly table ware, based on the typical goldsmith's and silversmith's work of the period. His soup-tureens, vegetable-dishes and plates with embossed borders were not only *the* fashion of the day, but have furnished the ideas for more than half the models that have been made since in most European countries.

Still more interesting as typifying the artistic modes of this period were the modelled groups and busts, which were so freely reproduced in biscuit porcelain. Sèvres, of course, claims most of these, though there are many models which were made at Vincennes before the removal of the factory to Sèvres, and as biscuit pieces were very seldom marked, we cannot always decide whether particular specimens were made at the earlier or later factory. Sometimes these figures are also found covered with a clear white glaze.[1]

Among the numerous decrees relative to Vincennes, in which nothing was too minute to escape attention, we have seen that all the pieces, except the flowers, were to be marked with a double L interlaced, forming the Royal cipher, while the special pieces of the King's own services and those intended for Royal presents generally had a *fleur de lys* over the cipher.

[1] The collection of M. le Comte de Chavagnac, so precious for its specimens of all the finest early French porcelains, contained two groups of children, modelled by La Rue, which are glazed. They give one the highest opinion of the beauty of the porcelain and the skill of the modelling and figure-making.

The mark is generally in blue onglaze or in gold, with or without an enclosed letter as date mark. Thus the letter A denotes 1753, B denotes 1754, etc. :

The series was adopted from 1756 at Sèvres, where also D denotes 1756, and Z denotes 1776.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PORCELAINS OF FRANCE—(*continued*)

SÈVRES

THE porcelain of Vincennes with all its beauty of material and varied wealth of decoration only served as *avant-courrier* to the glorious productions of Sèvres, which through all the vicissitudes of wars and revolutions has maintained its rank in the forefront of European porcelain works, and might with a little pardonable exaggeration be described as the Royal porcelain works of Europe. Its styles have been adapted and copied, just as Chinese and Japanese styles were once imitated, and every European state of importance has had subsidized or private factories, whose principal aim appears to have been to follow in the footsteps of Sèvres; in fact the ladies of Europe have not been more eager to follow the Paris fashions in dress than the porcelain-makers have been to imitate the productions and copy the styles of Sèvres porcelain.

When the affairs of the factory at Vincennes were approaching their final difficulties, M. Verdun, one of the shareholders, is said to have approached Madame de Pompadour and sought her aid and this all-powerful lady appears to have taken an active part in promoting the change of site. She decided on a piece of ground adjacent to a glassworks which the King had already given her the right to use, and the property was conveyed to the company of promoters of the porcelain manufactory for 30,000 livres, and the glassworks was converted into lodg-

SÈVRES

(Last years of Louis Quinze in Louis Seize style)

Tray

Height $2\frac{8}{10}$ in., length $14\frac{3}{8}$ in., depth $10\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Wallace Collection.

ings for the workpeople. The King bought a château, which had belonged to the musician Lully, called "La Diarme," near the road from Paris to Versailles. Madame de Pompadour seems to have carried everything through in her own way, for she selected an unknown architect, Lindel, who constructed a sort of little palace of three stories, partly on made ground where springs abounded so that the buildings had to be carried on arches to resist the pressure of the water. No attention seems to have been given to such essential details as the arrangements of the workshops in orderly sequence. In practice the workpeople lost endless time in going from story to story, and the pervading damp rendered some of the rooms almost useless. But, skilful as ever in devices for cajoling the King, the Pompadour had a summer-house built containing a suite of rooms or Royal apartments; for the Duc de Luynes, our gossiping guide, says:

"I went a little while ago to see the manufactory at Sèvres. The master builders have made a suite for the King composed of a big anteroom that would be serviceable for his guards; on the left side is a large chapel, the altar of which can be seen from every apartment in the suite. Next to the chapel is a large room and a very large cabinet.

"The King's apartment was not yet furnished when I was there six weeks ago. They were also engaged in building a warehouse for displaying the porcelain for sale, but it was not yet open to the public. To obtain admission it is necessary to have a ticket from the general superintendent. There are now about five hundred workpeople, who will require to be lodged in this building when it is finished. This manufactory is quite different from that

of Saxony, where before the invasion of the King of Prussia there were about 1,400 workpeople."

Complaints of the high prices of the Sèvres porcelain are frequent. The Marquis d'Argenson says: "The Marquise de Pompadour is interested already, and interests the King; but the pieces are sold at extravagant prices. The Saxon porcelain is better and cheaper, while that of China and Japan is cheaper still. Ours is sold to the merchants at 12 per cent. discount, but nobody buys it, though much is wasted on it; and thus everything is carried on beyond the funds of the undertaking."

Such criticisms and many others of similar tenor were undoubtedly sound, for the enormous sum of 1,320,000 livres having been expended in the adaptation of these unsuitable and badly situated premises, the prices of the porcelain were of necessity exorbitant. The ware was also exceeding fragile, for it was more thinly wrought than the porcelains of Vincennes, so that the shopkeepers of Paris and even the agents demanded an allowance for breakages, and then they took to hiring out Sèvres services for weddings and other festivities. One can feel no surprise that leakage and loss were on as great a scale as the other expenses of the factory. Another, and almost incredible, source of loss resulted from the custom of charging the same price for an article of the same shape irrespective of its decoration, so that a cup of given size and shape was sold at one fixed price whether decorated by an apprentice or a master artist.

Such methods would have ruined any enterprise that could not draw liberally on the public funds, and nothing but the direct interest of the King, stimulated by his courtiers and favourites, and especially by Madame de

Pompadour, who considered her interests as well as her pride to be engaged in the success of the undertaking, saved the enterprise from bankruptcy. More and more, by her interest and that of her friends and all who sought her protection, Sèvres became steadily an appanage of the Crown. Money was, as usual, urgently required, the last tenth of the share capital was called up in May, 1755, yet, in October of the same year, 20,000 livres were borrowed, and in December, 1755, a sub-lease of the fees for the hall-marking of gold and silver plate, and the taxes on candle-grease in the town of Paris were accorded to Sèvres by the Superintendent-General of Finances. Finally, in order to avoid the liquidation of the affair, the King was compelled to assume complete financial responsibility. An edict of November, 1759, decreed that the enterprise should be administered for the King under the authority of Sieur de Barberie de Courteille, Councillor of State and Superintendent of Finances. The fortunate shareholders seem to have been remarkably well treated, for they received the value of their shares in notes bearing interest at five per cent., and to meet these and other charges for buildings and equipment the manufactory received 80,000 livres in cash and 1,320,000 livres in bonds on the King's Estates of Brittany. Thus by cajolery, interest and indebtedness the French King became the sole proprietor of the works at Sèvres.

At this juncture M. Boileau, who has already been mentioned as a clerk from the office of taxes who was appointed managing-clerk at Vincennes when it became a Royal factory, had become known for his skill in controlling the finances there. He used his position with such skill and diplomacy that he was made financial superintendent

of the works at Sèvres, and he soon took active steps to assure the enterprise of a position above all rivalry or imitation in France. We have already had occasion to notice the severe restrictions imposed on the earlier factories, even those patronized by the great nobles, but the proceedings now initiated by M. Boileau went far beyond all the earlier edicts in assuring to the works at Sèvres the exclusive right to manufacture porcelains of artistic pretensions. Thus the edicts issued by the Lieutenant-General of Police, which must have been drawn up by Boileau, forbade all persons, whatever their rank or qualification, to make, or cause to be made, to sculpture, paint, or gild porcelain pieces in whatever form, or to sell or barter them, on pain of the confiscation of the porcelain, the destruction of the materials and ovens, together with a penalty of 3,000 livres, of which one third was to go to the Infirmary, one third to the Royal Hospital and the remaining third to the Royal Manufactory. The edict further decreed that all those manufacturers who were in possession of a privilege to manufacture and sell certain common porcelains, earthenwares of white paste or faïence painted in blue in the Chinese way, were forbidden to use any other colour, and especially gilded work, as well as the making of flowers, figures and sculptured pieces, except as ornaments in the decoration of their own wares only.

This rigorous, almost spiteful, enactment caused a great outcry from all the manufacturers of faïence and porcelain of Paris and the provinces, and as some of these, like Chantilly and Mennecy, were under the protection of powerful patrons or were even subsidized by them, some attention had to be given to their claims. In February, 1766, therefore, a fresh decree was issued in which it was stated that as the

King was unwilling to lay waste so many factories and let so many workpeople starve, it was permitted to manufacture porcelain, made in imitation of the Chinese, with such pastes as the managers of the works found necessary, whether in white or painted in blue and white, or *en camaïeu* in one single colour, on condition that each manager should paint, engrave, or stamp on the back of each of his pieces the initials of his name or other distinguishing mark which he must register before a magistrate and promise only to use. The managers of these works were expressly forbidden, under pretence of this leave, to paint their porcelain in any other colours than blue, or *en camaïeu* in one colour, or to use gold put on or inlaid, "until it is ordered otherwise," and they were expressly forbidden to make statues, figures, or ornaments in alto-relievo with porcelain paste, either biscuit or glazed. Such severe edicts compel us to realize why the contemporary porcelains of Chantilly and Mennecy are generally painted in blue or are, occasionally, decorated *en camaïeu*, but it is difficult for us with our different views of commercial economics to understand how an industry which it was advisable to develop that the prosperity of the country might be increased, could escape strangulation under such regulations. It is certain that several important French factories had to discharge a great many of their workpeople, and that others, interdicted from imitating the statuary groups and flower pieces of Saxony, died out a few years after this edict came into force.

In spite of these final restrictions, which brought disaster to so many factories in various parts of France, the financial affairs of Sèvres were still involved and unsatisfactory, for 1763 brought a further deficit of 96,000 livres. This was once more met from the King's privy purse, and from this

time he undertook to provide for the manufactory, so that, from 1763, Sèvres has belonged to the French King or the State, though its privileges have often been modified by decree or enactment under successive governments, as we shall see later on.

From about this time the soft porcelains (*pâte tendre*) of France reached the culminating point of their splendour, both in manufacture and decoration, for rarely beautiful as some of the earlier porcelains had been, they were all eclipsed by the magnificent productions of the era now about to open. We are fortunate in possessing in this country the collections of His Majesty the King, the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, the collections of the Rothschild family, and the Jones Bequest in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which together contain more of the magnificent specimens made at Sèvres between 1756 and 1769 than exist in any other country. Apparently the factory was largely engaged in the production of choice and elaborate furnishings for the palaces at Versailles, the Trianon, Bellevue, Marly, Meudon, St. Germain, and Fontainebleau, where many specimens still exist. They were freely used as diplomatic presents or even as diplomatic bribes, for no means were left untried to extend the glories of the Royal establishment, now in its full career of technical and artistic success. Louis XV was driven to send his silver plate to the mint twice during this crisis in the national finances, and as the nobles had to follow suit Sèvres porcelain was in demand notwithstanding its price.

Vases, designed by eminent architects and sculptors, often of considerable size and elaborate design, and displaying coloured grounds of great beauty with fine painting and the richest gilding, must have been made in profusion, for large

SÈVRES

Tea Service. Apple-green ground with rich gilding

Tray—Length 14½ in., diameter 11 in. *Cup*—Height 2⅝ in., width 3⅞ in. *Saucer*—Diameter 5¼ in. *Teapot*—Height 5 in., width 6⅜ in.
Wallace Collection.

numbers of them still exist. A visit to the great London collections previously mentioned will convey the fullest idea of their almost oppressive splendour and elaboration. I cannot do better than quote from my friend M. Auscher [1] the impressions made on his mind when we visited these collections together. "In the Wallace Collection there is a beautiful inkstand given by Louis XV to the dauphiness Marie Antoinette, which between the celestial and terrestrial globes bears the Royal crown. This and many other pieces of the utmost elegance and refinement convey to us a wonderful idea of the inventive genius of the decorators at Sèvres, and if we admire the taste and elegance of these pieces what are we to say of the technical skill displayed in their production? It was bold to render the horizontal or vertical lines of some architectural model in a material so easily deformed in the firing as this soft-paste porcelain, but it passes our knowledge to understand how they ever managed to maintain in the fire the pierced vases bearing dolphins, the important table-centres like the *Vaisseaux à mat*, or the candlestick vases in the form of elephants' heads—all superb pieces, manifesting the tender translucent quality of soft-paste porcelain to perfection. These are miracles of technique which a porcelain-maker of the present day does not profess to understand,[2] and when one considers the courage required to conceive such works, the beauty and delicacy of the shapes, and at the same time the quality and lustre of the material, it is safe to say that at no epoch have any similar *tours de force* been executed in pottery." Praise from Sir Hubert!

[1] Auscher, E. S., *A History and Description of French Porcelain*, p. 65. London, Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1905.

[2] Yet M. Auscher had been *chef de fabrication* at Sèvres for many years.

As with the shapes so, too, the decorations became more elaborate and sumptuous. The famous enamel-colour, so extensively used for grounds, known in France as "rose-Pompadour," and in England as "rose-Dubarry," which has a delicate carmine shade, made its appearance in 1757, when it is said to have been invented by Xrowet, a painter of flowers and arabesques. It is one of the colours derived from gold and is not easily produced to perfection, for if the temperature of the enamel kiln be a little too high it takes on a dirty yellow tone, and at too low a temperature it has a mottled appearance and a brownish tone. Many choice examples of this colour may, however, be seen in the London collections mentioned, where, indeed, every colour and style of the period can be studied from some of the choicest examples that exist, including a very rare lilac ground, of which the Sèvres Museum has only a few specimens, though there are quite a number in the Jones Bequest and in the Wallace Collection.

Other enamel-colours freely used as grounds from this period are *jonquille*, a fine soft yellow as the name implies, and two bright yet pleasant greens, *vert pré* or *vert Anglais* and *vert pomme* or *vert jaune*. Besides the grounds in a single enamel-colour there are a number of examples with broken colours, of which the best-known type is the *œil-de-perdrix*, obtained by dots of sea green or bright blue, gilded, on a white ground. The white is thus pleasantly diapered, and the little landscapes or figures in the reserved medallions are thrown into better relief.

The *bleu de roi* was seldom used without relief, for it is generally too dark in tone and would be overpoweringly heavy if used alone. Gold tracery in various patterns of network, *vermicelle* or *œil-de-perdrix*, woven

over the surface, relieved its heaviness and softened the effect. Hand in hand with these technical refinements the actual painting shows a marked improvement, so that even the simpler styles of decoration had a great vogue, and the white pieces decorated only with gold or with paintings in reserved medallions (*en camaïeu*) with landscapes and country figures, or courtiers masquerading as country folk, became quite a rage.

Neither the styles of the Far East nor of rival European factories were any longer regarded with a jealous eye. French porcelain had arrived at a style of its own, which embodied the European taste of the period so superbly that every porcelain factory in Europe of any note was driven to copy or follow it. Boucher, the famous French painter, who was employed to paint the portrait of Madame de Pompadour and to execute or superintend various decorative works at her château, is said to have been employed at the factory, and his style was certainly adopted there whole-heartedly and remained in favour for many years. With the splendid resources at their disposal every effort was made to avoid painting the same subject twice, for when two similar services had to be made they were painted with different subjects or with different grounds and ornament. Pieces intended for the King, or as special presents from him, bore a Royal crown, or had the Royal cipher, two interlaced L's, painted as the central feature of the ornament. Many examples thus distinguished are preserved in the Wallace Collection.

But the Sèvres porcelain of this period offers us a painted commentary on all the fashionable pursuits of the day, for besides the paintings of country scenes where the courtiers played the parts of swains with their attendant nymphs, we

have many scenes of gallantry or love, of mythological stories, or of battles and camps. The "Vase of the Battle of Fontenoy" and a similar vase, in the Wallace Collection, with a scene of a military encampment, have often been described; but every good collection of the finest French porcelains will provide examples which are at least noteworthy for their technique and for the skill and richness of their painting and gilding, and London, fortunately, is extremely rich in its public collections, which contain some of the finest examples that are known.

From 1756 to 1769, inclusive, the years were indicated by the letters D to R between the interlaced L's. Seventeen hundred and sixty-nine is often known as "the year of the comet," for the appearance of a comet caused such a sensation that the Sèvres decorators used the drawing of a comet instead of the letter R for the date mark.[1] The statement is, however, supported by the majority of the most careful writers who can be claimed as authoritative.

SÈVRES AND THE PRODUCTION OF HARD-PASTE PORCELAINS

The difficulties and the expense of making the French porcelain of the soft-paste[2] type which we have described, and the comparative cheapness, therefore, of the Meissen and other German porcelains was felt to be undermining the position of the Royal factory of France, even while such heroic efforts were being made to make it as successful

[1] Some doubt has been thrown on this "comet" mark, for MM. Gasnault and Garnier in their little work on *French Pottery* (Handbooks, Victoria and Albert Museum) state that they have never seen it.

[2] The term soft-paste refers rather to the inability of the material to endure a high temperature of firing without deformation than to the hardness as tested by a file. We probably owe the term *pâte tendre* to Brongniart's passion for scientific classification.

SÈVRES

Two-handled Flower-vase. *Bleu de roi* ground. White panels painted by Le Bel (jeune). Gilding by Le Guay. (Date, latter 1773)

Vase. *Bleu de roi* ground. Garlands of roses and lilies. Gilding by Le Guay
Height 17¼ in., width 9½ in.

Two-handled Flower-vase. Similar to one on left
Height 13¾ in., width 6 in.

Wallace Collection.

financially as it had become artistically. Moreover, the superior hardness and durability of true porcelain were greatly in its favour, for utility had to be considered with the growing demand for table services and other domestic requirements. The surpassing beauty of the soft-paste porcelain and the perfection conferred by the nature of its materials on the sumptuous decoration then in vogue were undeniable, but the risks and cost of its manufacture were enormous, as we have seen, so that, finally, scientific pride and commercial interest combined to force the hand of the French chemists responsible for the work and they too were driven to experiment in hard-paste porcelain. Both Hellot and Macquer had been approaching the subject from the chemical standpoint, and the discovery of the famous deposits of kaolin and other necessary materials at St. Yrieix, some twenty miles south-west of Limoges, enabled them to succeed perfectly in their researches.

Arcanists and other projectors of every degree of unreliability were busy with the coveted invention, and we may just mention Guettard (1765), who discovered kaolin near Alençon and truly claimed to have made an experimental hard-paste porcelain ; but his pieces were grey and indifferently translucent, so that the authorities at Sèvres declined to adopt his methods. The porcelain of the Comte de Brancas-Lauraguais (1766), who was aided by a chemist named Darcet, also attracted some attention, but he was unable to establish its manufacture in France, and is commonly reputed to have passed over into England, where he had some relations with our early English porcelain works, either at Chelsea or at Worcester, or possibly both.

Every inventor who claimed to possess the secret appears

to have been listened to, and given indefinite promises of reward in certain eventualities, and one cannot resist the feeling that there was a certain amount of jealousy between Boileau, the financial and business manager, and Hellot, Millot and Macquer, the chiefs of the chemical staff. The latter knew both the Chinese and the Saxon materials, for the Elector of Saxony had forwarded samples of his kaolin for their experiments. With mixtures of this material and kaolin from Alençon, Macquer and Millot had made an inferior grey porcelain, and expeditions were made into Burgundy, Champagne and other districts in search of suitable minerals.

Chance, however, came to their aid at this moment. The Archbishop of Bordeaux visited Sèvres towards the end of 1765, where M. Boileau conducted him over the factory and in the laboratory showed him the results of Macquer's experiments with various clays. At their request the Archbishop took samples of the desired kaolin to see if similar materials were known in the district round Bordeaux. After returning to his province the Archbishop called in an apothecary, Villaris, who was well acquainted with a wide district and travelled about a good deal. Villaris visited the Pyrenees and the Cévennes, but met with no success until he happened to show the sample of kaolin, given him for the purpose, to the Sieur Darnet of St. Yrieix, in the Périgord. Darnet confounded Villaris by showing him a similar substance which his wife had been using as a washing material for her linen, and which was found on the surface of some ground near St. Yrieix. Villaris secured about three pounds of this clay and sent it to Sèvres.

In the museum at Sèvres there is a little statuette of Bacchus, in a white-glazed hard-paste porcelain, which was

made from this sample and is rightfully described as the first piece of true porcelain made at Sèvres. But the difficulties of the investigators were not yet ended, for Villaris refused to disclose where his clay had been found, hoping to obtain a large sum of money for his chance services. Boileau immediately obtained permission from the minister Bertin to send Millot and Macquer in search of the minerals, which they ultimately found at St. Yrieix,[1] and were able to forward about four hundred pounds' weight of it to Sèvres, via the custom house at Limoges. After the arrival of this material they used it successfully, and in June, 1769, Macquer communicated an account of the discoveries to the Academy of Sciences, and explained, without entering into technical details, the manufacture of the first hard-paste porcelain of Sèvres. All that remained was to secure the Royal approval, and Macquer gives an entertaining description of the first exhibition of specimens at Versailles, which deserves to be repeated. "On St. Thomas's Day,[2] at eight o'clock in the morning, I went with M. de Montigny to Versailles. At 11.30 M. Bertin who had gone in to the King, sent for us to take us into the rooms where the porcelains from Sèvres were exhibited as usual, and where, on a special table, was the new porcelain all in white and gold. There were about sixty pieces, all of them very beautiful. As we were examining them the King came in alone. He received us very graciously, and, without stopping to look at the old porcelains he went straight to examine the new, with which he seemed very much pleased. Three coffee-pots of our new porcelain had been put before

[1] An amusing account of this expedition will be found in M. Auscher's *History and Description of French Porcelain*, pp. 79–80. Cassell and Co., 1905.

[2] December 21, 1769.

a large fire. The King asked us several questions, and told us how, a little while ago, he had had a little experience with a cooking-pot of M. de Laborde's porcelain, which being put over a spirit-lamp, in order to boil some water, was immediately broken. He inferred from this that the spirit-lamp was more dangerous to the porcelain than a coal fire. At this moment the water began to boil in a little cooking-pot of our new porcelain which had been placed on a spirit lamp, but an instant afterwards this pot also broke in the presence of His Majesty, who burst out laughing, going backwards and saying, 'Sir! Sir!' after which he went to Mass, at which we were also present."

Macquer was naturally chagrined at this *contretemps*, but a little later he repeated the experiment successfully and received the warm congratulations of the King in the presence of the Court, and this little ceremony might be called the "baptism" of the hard-paste porcelain of Sèvres, which from this time began to claim the lion's share of attention at the Royal factory, though the earlier and in some respects more beautiful product was not yet abandoned, and the two porcelains were manufactured side by side for some years, probably until the storms of the era of revolution.

SÈVRES FROM 1769–74

The short period from the appearance of the hard porcelain of Sèvres to the death of Louis XV in 1774, is commonly spoken of as the Dubarry period, but the influence of Madame Dubarry cannot be compared with that of Madame de Pompadour, though she manifested great interest in the porcelains and was a steady friend of the undertaking, measured by the demands she made on it.

SÈVRES

"Biscuit" Group

Height 6½ in.

Franks Collection, British Museum.

During these years and until the Revolution both the old and the new porcelain were freely used, indeed, the earlier porcelain does not seem to have been entirely abandoned until the opening years of the next century, when Brongniart was appointed director; and this able scientific potter, who was a true pioneer in so many departments of ceramics, decided that the material was too uncertain in the fire for the grandiose productions with which Napoleon strove to outshine the kings of France.

Boileau still remained director, and was ably supported by the staff of artists of whom we have already spoken. Thus we find among the sculptors, Duplessis, Falconet, Bachelier, La Rue, and Le Riche with important works; the painters—whose work appears to have been considerably divided, one painter adding flowers or emblems to a vase on which a naval or military scene had been painted by another—were too numerous to mention singly, but the best known were: Flower-painters:—Aubert, Armand (the younger), Barrat, Bouillat, Bulidon, Buteux (father and son), Chapuis (the younger), Commelin, Cornaille, La Roche, Le Bel (the elder), Mérault (the younger), Micaud, Niquet, Noël, Pierre, Sioux, Taillandier, Tandart and Tardy; painters of miniatures and pastoral scenes:—Asselin, Chabry and Pithou (the younger); landscapes and subjects *en camaïeu*:—Bouchet, Bouillat, Evans and Rosset; sea pieces and military subjects:—Morin and Pithou (the elder); ornaments and emblems:—Chulot, Falot, Mérault (the elder) and Vieillard. The most famous gilders were Le Guay, Beaudoin, Prévost, Chauvaux and Vincent.[1]

[1] The reader desirous of the most accurate information as to the painters and gilders employed at Vincennes and Sèvres between 1750 and 1900 is referred to the offici *Guide du Musée Céramique de Sèvres*, by M. G. Papillon.

The mark used during this period was the interlaced L's already illustrated (on p. 155), with the date letters R to V, 1769–74.

SÈVRES UNDER LOUIS XVI (1774–89)

Every writer who essays to follow the history of porcelain in France, and especially in the Royal manufactories, is driven to comment on the changes which took place during the period now to be considered. Doubtless the change was accentuated for Sèvres by the death of Boileau in 1773. He had been director throughout its most glorious period of activity after having served as managing-clerk at Vincennes before the removal of the works to its present site, and his only ambition appears to have been to conduct the factory with grandeur and success. So successful was his administration that when he died the cash in hand amounted to 300,000 livres, with materials wholly or partly manufactured, book debts and stores to an equal value, so that far from being in debt to the King the enterprise was in a flourishing financial position.

The feminine influence, always so important in princely or Royal factories, now passed from the hands of the King's mistresses into the hands of the famous Queen, Marie Antoinette. From her first coming to France she had been interested in the porcelains of Sèvres, as was natural in a daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa who had become the patroness of the porcelain works at Vienna. The examples which seem to have had the greatest attraction for Marie Antoinette were as far removed from the porcelains of her native Court as possible. Simple shapes, such as vases to hold only a single flower, were scattered about in her little rooms in the Petit Trianon, and some at

all events have been restored to their old home, for they are now to be seen in the apartments she once occupied. Simple decorations, too, appear to have been favoured by her, for the well-known pattern with little sprigs of detached cornflower (*décor barbeau*), is said to have been devised by Hettlinger (to whom we shall refer presently) especially for her. From that time to the present this little sprigged pattern has had the widest vogue in Europe, for it has been almost as freely reproduced at every porcelain factory, as the Kakiyemon patterns or the blue willow. Every good collection of Sèvres porcelain will contain an example of the cornflower sprig, and it is unnecessary to mention particular specimens as they are so plentiful, though we are dealing with it out of chronological order as it is believed to have made its appearance only in 1782.

After the death of Boileau an attempt was made to persuade Louis XVI to make a grant of the buildings, etc., to a company, as otherwise it might prove too great a drain on his resources, though, as we have seen, at this very time it was in a sound condition, financially and otherwise. The King refused to listen to these propositions, for he declared his pride in the works and his determination to retain it in his own hands, and immediately nominated Parent as director. Parent was an active and industrious man who worked very hard at the practical part of the business and is said to have greatly improved the firing of the hard porcelain besides introducing clever painters and sculptors. Unfortunately he seems to have had little financial ability, and the book-keeping and other commercial matters were so seriously involved that, in 1778, he was imprisoned on a charge of malversation of the funds of the establishment, for not only had the 300,000 livres

left in cash by Boileau disappeared, but more than 130,000 livres were owing to the workpeople and the purveyors of materials. The task of reorganization was entrusted to the Comte d'Angivillers, director of the Department of Fine Arts, and by a decree dated December 20, 1778, the King appointed Regnier, formerly sub-director, to succeed Parent as director, with whom was joined in 1779, the Sèvres chemist and geologist Hettlinger, who seems to have had as puerile a mind as ever disported itself in such a position, though he soon learned to interest the King in his childish conceits.

Hettlinger's account of one of the annual exhibitions of porcelain novelties at the palace of Versailles, shows us these influences in full play. " I have already said that an exhibition of porcelains takes place at the end of every year up to the day of the ' Three Magi ' (Epiphany). It is held at the Royal palace, but the public are allowed to come and buy the pieces. The King occupies in Versailles, besides the state rooms, the *Petits Appartements*, where he passes his private life. Three of these rooms are cleared of their furniture, and the porcelain pieces are exhibited on tables. This year he did not wait until the arrival of the workpeople, but must himself be unpacking the pieces, breaking not a few, and mixing everything up so that it took us hours to put it straight. The King delights in his manufactory at Sèvres, and he said to one of his confidants, ' Our brave Sèvres men will soon be here. I must make haste to shoot some game.' The third day of the exhibition the minister introduced me to the King, announcing in a loud voice my name and titles, to which he added, with his usual kindness, some especial praises of my knowledge and my skill in the art, asking me, at the same time,

SÈVRES

Flower-shaped Vase and Pierced Cover (*Vase Tulipe*).
Panel, "Soldiers Carousing," painted by Morin.
Bouquets of flowers on reverse, probably by Theodore Buteux.
(Style and period of Louis XV)
Height 17¼ in., width 9⅝ in., depth 7⅝ in.

Wallace Collection.

whether I had not got some proofs of it with me. I showed him two snuff-boxes decorated with birds, the decoration being made with natural feathers, which the minister handed to the King, who admired my work and my patience. . . . Our interview was very successful, thanks to an ingenious idea which had caused me to make some white porcelain pieces attached to natural insects and put under glass shades, such as a 'Cupid in a car drawn by six butterflies,' and another, 'Cupid as a huntsman,' where the dog was represented by a horn beetle. While I was busily arranging these things, the King came and laughed heartily, saying, 'This must surely be your own invention?' He asked me how I trained the butterflies, and preserved the insects alive. . . . The delight of the King made these beetles so highly esteemed that they were sold at the price of a cow in Switzerland." Shades of the Grand Monarque! No wonder the wrinkle on the nose of Marie Antoinette deepened and that she patronized a Parisian porcelain factory on her own account.

To return to more serious things we find a radical alteration in the spirit of the porcelains which date from this period. The style of Louis XV was passing into that of Louis XVI, the outlines of the pieces becoming more severe and classical, for the forms of ancient Greek vases were at this moment brought into favour by the discoveries at Pompeii and elsewhere in southern Italy. Lagrenée and Vivant Denon sent from Naples specimens of Greek and Etruscan vases, some of which are still preserved in the Ceramic Museum at Sèvres, and these seem to have introduced a fresh style in the shapes and decorations of the Sèvres porcelain.[1]

[1] The neo-classical revival had a profound influence on all the important porcelains and other fine pottery throughout Europe. Wedgwood's vases, busts and cameos have left perhaps the most enduring results on subsequent work in pottery.

Hard-paste porcelain, with its greater plasticity and its superior resistance in the kiln, in spite of the higher temperature required, enabled the Sèvres potters to manufacture vases of large size and, from 1783, many monumental vases were made, some of which may still be seen in the Louvre. The first of these, of the shape known as the "Medici Vase," is about 5 feet high. The foot and neck are in rich *bleu de roi*, and the body of the vase has a girdle of biscuit porcelain and chiselled bronze, gilded. A pair of smaller vases of the same shape were made, perhaps as trial essays, before this large specimen was attempted and these are also in the Louvre. Hettlinger records: "We have made a porcelain vase of a very large size, about 5 feet high, and of a shape which leaves nothing to be desired. On the body of the vase is displayed 'Atalanta's Race,' executed with unexampled perfection. This rare piece, in the composition of which 70,000 livres' worth of material has been used, was intended for a foreign Court, but the King has reserved this for himself, and has ordered a second one to be made of the same size. Both are to be used for display in the galleries of the Louvre." This replica is now in the Pitti Palace, Florence. The "Vase Cordelier" of 1785, with a brown tortoise-shell ground (*fond Écaillé*), and bearing bronze cords supported by cupids, is still larger. Hettlinger wrote, in 1785, that this was the biggest porcelain vase that had ever been made, and apparently the statement is correct.

The practice of using specially fine examples of Sèvres porcelain as diplomatic presents, which has already been mentioned in the account of the previous reign, was continued. Thus, in 1775, the Princess of the Asturias was presented with a white dinner service, decorated with

SÈVRES

Écuelle and Stand. Royal blue ground with rich gilding.
Panels painted with "Cupids" in landscapes

Écuelle—Height $4\frac{3}{4}$ in., width 7 in. *Stand*—Length $8\frac{7}{8}$ in., width $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

flowers and landscapes, and a biscuit epergne worth together some 24,000 livres. In 1777, the Emperor Joseph II was presented with a green-bordered dinner service decorated with paintings of flowers and fruit, as well as an epergne, and with two vases each of which bore his medallion, valued altogether at 43,000 livres. In 1778, four tea and coffee services were made for the Emperor of Morocco and his ambassador. Most enterprising of all was it to send a magnificent present of Sèvres porcelain to the Emperor of China, comprising vases, jars and statuettes in biscuit porcelain, after Boizot.[1]

Prince Henry of Prussia visited Paris in 1784 and received as presents a tea service in soft-paste porcelain decorated with translucent enamel, a dessert service with a green border decorated with flowers, and a series of biscuit statuettes of famous Frenchmen, including Corneille, Racine, Molière, Du Guesclin, and Condé.

About 1780, the so-called "jewelled Sèvres" made its appearance. This costly decorative device is perhaps the culminating instance of the application of spots of brilliant translucent enamels, sometimes applied over *paillons* of gold foil, which increased their brilliance so that, when completed, the porcelain appears to be actually studded with rubies, sapphires, emeralds and pearls. Examples of these elaborate productions are naturally uncommon, but some of the finest that were made are now in English collections. The Wallace Collection boasts some perfect examples of the first order,[2] but magnificent examples are

[1] Terra-cotta models of these and other statuettes by Boizot are preserved in the museum of Sèvres.

[2] Naturally, perhaps, forgeries of "jewelled Sèvres" are not uncommon, but genuine pieces are not likely to be met with, and if, by chance, such a thing were to happen the specimen would have a pedigree beyond dispute.

also in the Rothschild collections and, perhaps above all, in the Royal collections at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. Among the treasured examples of Sèvres porcelain in the Jones Bequest in the Victoria and Albert Museum is a vase of medium size dated 1780, which was chosen by Marmontel, who was about this time secretary to the Academy, acting for the King of Sweden, to be sent with a number of other pieces as a present to Catherine II, Empress of Russia. Marmontel's letters leave no doubt that this is the vase, for it reads: "A large vase in *bleu de roi* and gold, with a cartouche representing a shipping scene. In this little picture two men are represented as reading in a book, placed on a hogshead, and it was agreed between Marmontel and the painter that he should inscribe on the book the words: Catherine II—Gustave III. Neutralité Armée, 1780."

On this vase the shipping scene was painted by Morin, the floral ornament by Fontaine and the gilding by Leguay.

The mention of Catherine II of Russia immediately recalls the famous service made for this extraordinary ruler, who commissioned very large services both from Sèvres and from Wedgwood in England. She commissioned at Sèvres a service of 744 pieces, decorated with the utmost elaboration and richness. The groundwork of the pieces was of fine turquoise enamel, and the borders, on a similar turquoise ground, were ornamented with cameos copied from antiques in the museums of Rome and Naples, all much enriched by the finest gilding. Units of this service are now to be found in various museums and private collections, as during a fire at the palace of Tsarskoye Selo a number of the pieces were stolen and have found their

way to other countries. A plate of this service is to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which proves by the marks to have been decorated by Chapuis and Boulanger and gilded by Prévost about 1777. The service took many years to execute, for it was not delivered until 1788, when the Empress refused to pay the 331,317 livres charged for the 744 pieces; but it is uncertain what payments were made or if the matter was ever really settled, for a long wrangle took place between the foreign ministers of France and Russia, and as the Revolution broke out in 1789, nothing definite is known as to the end of the negotiations, or if they did end except by Catherine retaining the porcelain and, at least, some of the money.

Throughout this period, and probably until the first years of the nineteenth century, although the hard porcelain was most extensively employed because of its easier and more certain production, some soft-paste ware was also made, and a pale canary yellow ground makes its first appearance on the work of Sèvres, and furnishes some charming examples of the later styles, for it is not overdone with ornament. The hard-paste porcelain, however, claimed more attention and shows steady technical improvement, while certain new ground colours were obtained by the ingenious device of applying them to the surface of the fired glaze and re-firing at the same high temperature, so that they became thoroughly incorporated with the glaze.[1] The ground known as *bleu de Sèvres* was obtained in this way, and by mixing the cobalt pigment with glaze before it was applied the pale flaxen blue, which is usually mottled

[1] The same practice has long been followed at many English factories, but I have never been able to learn where it was first introduced, though it is claimed for Derby and Worcester as well as for Sèvres.

or marbled, was produced. The same method led to the production of the brown tortoise-shell, which developed the full splendour of its transparent depth in the enamel kiln. This colour, further marbled with cobalt blue, made the rarer green tortoise-shell, specimens of which are now almost unobtainable.

Hettlinger also introduced, about 1775, the manufacture of agate wares in imitation of those which Wedgwood had brought to perfection in England, and these were generally mounted in gilded bronze, as Wedgwood's pieces often were.[1]

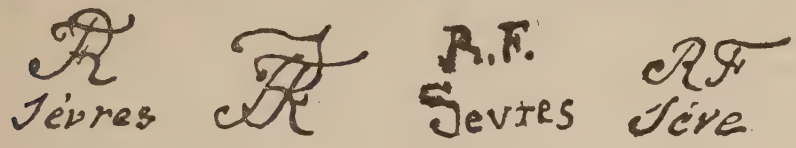
The sculptors of the time were Desprès, Le Riche, Léance, Levaux, and Mathians. The figure-makers and modellers employed in sharpening and finishing the soft-paste porcelains included Beslé, Brachard, Chaponet, Huet, Martin-Bougon, Olocque and Humber, who was also an excellent flower-maker; in the hard-paste porcelain workshops the best-known sculptors were Age, Bono, Borniche, Caron, Deparis and Martin, with some thirty working assistants.

The principal painter was Genest, with about one hundred and twelve other painters, the most famous of whom have been mentioned, for they were already employed at the end of the reign of Louis XV.

The date marks from 1774 to 1777 were the letters from V to Z. For 1778 the date mark is A A, for 1779 B B, and correspondingly year by year to 1792, when the mark was O O. Hardly any two authorities give these date marks to the same year, so that I have fol-

[1] Specimens of these Wedgwood agate wares will be found in the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, but fine examples are shown in the Wedgwood Institute at Burslem, and the best collection is that of Mr. Joseph Mayer, now in the Liverpool Museum.

lowed what I believe to be the most authoritative reading. After the royal mark disappears we have the following, in underglaze blue, which are attributed to 1792–93 :



SÈVRES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD (1789-1800)

The existence of the directors, artists and workpeople at Sèvres during these years of turmoil and unsettlement was always difficult and often even desperate. While the Revolution was only a threatening shadow the national finances were becoming seriously embarrassed and the yields of the onerous taxation grew steadily less. No steps appear to have been taken to curtail the production of porcelain, and the warehouses and storerooms were gradually filled to overflowing. Yet the sales had been steadily diminishing until they almost ceased, and Hettlinger and Regnier, the directors, found it increasingly difficult to raise sufficient funds to pay the salaries and wages, apart from maintaining the necessary supplies of various materials. It was imperative to diminish expenditure, but the decision to limit the production, for which no considered scheme was prepared, seems to have been disastrous, as such sudden devices usually are. Immediately some of the best workers left the factory and either joined other manufactories in France, went abroad, or set up little kilns of their own, so that existing factories had to face this further competition, which may have seemed more serious than it really was, so great was the unsettlement everywhere. Either because they

had become unenforceable or would have been defied, the edicts which had conferred such a monopoly on Sèvres were allowed to fall into abeyance, for we read of no attempt to enforce them, and the state of affairs in the factory appears to have been a pale reflex of the conditions in Paris, for some of the workpeople soon brought charges of neglect and mismanagement against the directors, and it is inconceivable that much good work can have been done, for heated political discussion engenders a bad atmosphere for the pursuit of scientific or artistic work. Rival camps were formed among the workpeople and artists, the moderates adhering to royalist ideas and desiring to continue to work as before, while those who advocated revolutionary ideas accused the management, and particularly the heads of the various departments, of bringing about by their selfish indifference the deplorable state of affairs which existed.

An attempt was made in 1790 by outside financial interests to buy the works on condition that they paid its debts, but this suggestion was received with indignation by Louis XVI, who refused to entertain the idea, and wrote at the foot of the report on this suggestion : " I intend to keep Sèvres at my own expense, but I wish the expenditure to be reduced and so regulated as not to exceed a hundred thousand *écus* [£12,000], the monthly salaries of the workmen not to exceed 12,000 livres [about £450], if they cannot be further reduced. The debts shall be paid with the proceeds of the sales, and I will have no more debts incurred, which will be an easy thing since I supply the monthly money from the funds set apart for the expenses of the Royal palaces. I wish an economical plan of administration to be drawn up within a short time An exact account of the materials

SÈVRES

Covered Box. Decorated by Mme. Binet
Height 4 in., width 5⅕ in.

Covered Bowl and Tray. Decorated by Tandart; said to have belonged to Louis XVI. Mark: 1760
Bowl and Cover—Height 6 in., width 8 in.
Tray—Length 12⅓ in., diameter 9 in.

Covered Box. Decorated by Mme. Binet
Height 4 in., width 5⅕ in.

Wallace Collection.

supplied as well as of the sales shall be made, and the money shall be delivered to me after discharging the debts, so that I shall be able to judge from a thorough knowledge of the matter whether I should keep the manufactory or dispose of it in a more advantageous way than would be possible at present."

This was doubtless a feasible plan, but events moved more rapidly than the King in the affairs of the nation, as in 1791 the National Assembly decided that Sèvres should not be alienated with or included in the National Properties, and by a decree of May 26, 1791, it was reckoned among the King's possessions, and its expenses were to be chargeable to his civil list. It is estimated that at this juncture the works, with its stock-in-trade, materials and stores, was worth more than 1,300,000 livres, and the debts were only some 200,000 livres. To clear off the debts, it was decided to sell a portion of the finished stock, while current expenses, it was supposed, would be more than covered by current sales.

Such was the plan, but in 1792, Haudry, the overseer of the salt mines of Franche-Comté, who knew nothing whatever about the manufacture of porcelain, was appointed commissary, and under the direction of Roland, Minister of the Interior, was charged with the administration of Sèvres. Hettlinger and Regnier had to be retained in their posts or chaos would have supervened, for Haudry was entirely ignorant of the methods of manufacture. In fact, the whole arrangement appears to have been a political one, and many of the workpeople seem to have abandoned work for the simpler and more exciting pastime of denouncing the managers and overseers to the ominous Committee of Public Safety. Hettlinger and Regnier were clearly

suspect and were closely watched, while their papers were seized more than once. Finally they were arrested, along with several others of the managing staff, and a member of the Convention named Battelier was appointed administrator, who apparently worked through a delegate of his, an artist of the factory, one J. B. Chanou, who had denounced the directors. Battelier and Chanou made affairs more chaotic still, for Chanou stole the goods and misused or embezzled the moneys, and he is said to have instigated Battelier to discharge Barrau, the cashier, on false charges. Barrau's goods were seized and he was ordered to collect all the debts owing to the factory within a month—an absurdly impossible condition. A crowning act of folly, though one quite in keeping with some of the nonsensical ideas of the day, was reached in the decision that in future all the superior posts should be filled by election of the workpeople. In fact, short of seizing the factory and selling the stock for their own purposes, it is difficult to imagine what follies Battelier and Chanou did not commit.

Hettlinger, who had been released from prison on account of ill health, repeatedly asked permission to leave France, but the Committee of Agriculture, who had just received charge of the works, objected to this as they felt the need of his knowledge in the management of the factory. For this reason he was indemnified and restored to his position in the works, being granted a salary of 3,500 francs yearly, conditionally on his remaining at his post. He was given a colleague named Salmon as co-director, with whom were joined Meyer as director of finance, Lagrenée as chief painter, Boizot as director of sculpture, while the famous Berthollet became chief chemist, though he can have had little influence, for he soon received another appointment and was replaced

SÈVRES

Two-handled Vase and Cover.
(Style and period of Louis XVI)
Height 18⅜ in., width 10⅝ in.

Wallace Collection.

by Darcet, who held the position until Brongniart became chief of the factory under Napoleon.

The condition of the factory was pitiable in the extreme, and the workpeople were literally starving; indeed it seems almost incredible that the business did not come to an end from sheer inanition. Yet through all the difficulties work must have continued, for in July, 1793, the Minister of the Interior allowed the sale of painted and modelled pieces, and it was found that there were 300,000 francs' worth of such finished goods in store. Empargtay, a Paris merchant, signed a contract for exporting 230,706 francs' worth of porcelain, and 33,204 francs' worth of defective white pieces were sold to another merchant or *entrepreneur*, Lignereux, for sale in Paris. The unfortunate staff received none of this money, not a sou, so urgent were the needs of the Government, and the directors were driven to extremities to keep the workpeople from starvation. Hettlinger is said to have sold his jewellery to provide food for them, as, often, the occasional doles of meat or bread granted by the Government were all they had, or could obtain, in the way of food. It is recorded that, in 1795, a Government ration of flour was served out, "to keep the workpeople alive," but it was so dirty and putrid that it was unfit even for animals.

Finally, the last possessions of the workpeople were seized by their landlords and the tax-gatherers, those twin daughters of the horse-leech, and an application to Talleyrand, Minister for Foreign Affairs, for payments for the diplomatic presents or bribes which still continued to be given, received the characteristic answer that as he had had no open credit at the Treasury for a long time he was unable to give a discount. At this crisis, Perregaux,

the banker, advanced 5,000 francs, and, failing repayment of the money, accepted porcelains for the total of his loan and interest in 1798. But there was no longer a demand for the current productions ; France, herself, could buy but little, and Lignereux could supply the needs of Paris through the Parisian decorators to whom he sold the imperfect white pieces bearing the mark of the Royal factory.[1]

These truly insignificant sums brought little relief, and the workpeople presented petition after petition until in despair they went in a body to present a personal petition to the minister, François de Neufchâteau, who listened sympathetically but was unable to relieve their distress. After approaching the Council of the Five Hundred, and ultimately the Directory, they were granted by the former body a sum of 100,000 francs, and this enabled the enterprise to struggle through in a deplorable fashion.

Such uncertainty and long-drawn unrest were fatal to the productions of the factory both technically and artistically, and such sculptors and painters as remained had to meet the most capricious and inartistic demands : cups and saucers with tricolour ribbons and wreaths of tiny flowers of forget-me-not and the like, and, for birthday gifts, monograms or initials in little roses and forget-me-nots ; but the passion for political emblems was rampant, and "good citizens," to use the cant phrase of the day, must have cups and plates where the fasces of Roman lictors and tricolour cockades intermingle with Phrygian caps and the initials of the King. Another wave of passion for antique styles rolled over everything—furniture, decoration, dress

[1] Hence those pieces which annoy collectors still, for the pieces were made and glazed at Sèvres, but the marks and decorations were added subsequently, and their paternity cannot always be traced.

and porcelain. The Convention itself decreed the manufacture of a memorial of the Republic, which, however, does not appear to have been actually made, though a full description of its proposed composition is still preserved. The principal group was to represent "Despotism thrown from its pedestal, and carrying down the nobility in its fall."[1]

The manufacture of soft-paste porcelain seems to have been abandoned, though the immense stock accumulated in the warehouses was gradually diminished by decorating suitable pieces, which were not replaced. As we have already said, the hard-paste pieces made at this time were also inferior both in colour and decoration, even when they were not altogether contemptible.

From about 1792, busts of Brutus, Diderot, and Voltaire were made, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau as a Roman, while busts of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre are well known. The successes of the revolutionary armies were naturally commemorated by the appearance of busts of the victorious generals, and the busts of Joubert and Marceau, as well as a medallion of Hoche, were modelled by Boizot. The bust of Bonaparte was also modelled by Boizot, and the Directory gave orders to Sèvres to send to the members of the Executive Committee and to the "*citoyen Bonaparte*" busts of the victorious generals, "as it is the duty of this national establishment to reproduce in a manner both useful and agreeable the features of a citizen who has done the Republic such great services." Singular milestones in the career of this great man!

Mention of Napoleon also recalls the Egyptian style, which was introduced at Sèvres after the expedition to

[1] Auscher, E. S., *A History and Description of French Porcelain*, pp. 146–7. London, Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1905.

the East, and which reached its apogee in the "Egyptian" service made for use in the Tuileries on special occasions, but which was presented to the Tsar of Russia in 1807. This service had as centre-piece a reproduction of the Temple of Philæ, with two other temples as side-pieces, while for the ends of the tables there were statues of Memnon and sphinxes. The pieces of this service, proper, had a ground of royal blue relieved with hieroglyphics in gold, and with *grisaille* paintings of Egyptian views executed by Swebach after drawings made on the spot by Denon. But these various services will be described in their proper place when we come to deal with Sèvres under Napoleon.

There seems to be little agreement among the various French authorities as to the date marks used throughout this period, but the following statement represents the best opinions of the present time. From 1789 to 1792 inclusive, the mark consisted of the two interlaced L's, with the date marks L L, M M, N N, O O. From 1792 to 1800, the date marks were omitted and the interlaced L's were replaced by interlaced letters R F (*République Française*), either above or below the words "Sèvres" or "Seve."

SÈVRES UNDER NAPOLEON

The history of Sèvres under Napoleon was marked by the directorship of Alexandre Brongniart, a name almost as illustrious in ceramic history as that of his Imperial master is in the domains of war and statecraft. Brongniart, too, had one of those great and comprehensive minds which neglects no trifling piece of knowledge in its survey, and which is capable of erecting great accomplishments on a basis of patiently acquired and tested facts. Napoleon's victories

opened to him the stores of information accumulated by other European porcelain-makers, and French missionaries still provided him with fresh knowledge and specimens of the contemporary materials and colours used in China. His indefatigable mind sought everywhere for information, materials and specimens of pottery and porcelain of all ages, and from these and other sources he distilled, through the alembic of a choice, scientific mind, not only the works in porcelain which marked his long rule at Sèvres, but the stores of information and technical description in his monumental "Traité des Arts Céramiques," first published in 1844.[1]

Naturally his first efforts as director of Sèvres were devoted to the reorganization of the staff and the processes of manufacture, both of which had fallen into disorganization during the revolutionary period. He retained the able services of Boizot, the sculptor and chief of staff of the modellers and figure-makers, while Lagrenée was principal painter, with Van Spaendonck as chief flower-painter. Financial worries were eased by the grant of a regular subsidy from 1801, and in 1806 Napoleon decided that Sèvres and the Gobelins tapestry works should be taken under the Imperial care and managed with the principal aim of recording and perpetuating his glories, though such a man must have been well aware that the provision of ample means for work and the appointment of directors of ability must be the surest steps he could take for the foundation of these industries on a firm and enduring basis. Certainly, the history of Sèvres from that time has been one of

[1] This great work is indispensable to any student of pottery and porcelain. Like all other books on the subject, it is strangely imperfect in parts, but it will ever remain a wonderful survey of the state of knowledge of the manufacture and decoration of pottery and porcelain at the time of its appearance. The later editions were edited with additions by Salvétat.

continued progress, with many eddies in the stream; but the stream has flowed on with little interruption from that day to this, except for the minor disturbances set up by revolutions and wars, and Sèvres remains to-day a school of discovery and experiment influencing the doings of potters in all other countries by its technical inventions and its decorative styles.

Probably it was owing to his distinctively scientific temper that Brongniart decided quite early in his career as director at Sèvres to abandon the beautiful but treacherous and difficult soft-paste porcelain and to concentrate his energies on hard-paste porcelain of the most refractory Chinese type. The porcelain introduced by Hellot and Macquer, from 1769, had a calcareous glaze which could be decorated with a reasonably wide range of underglaze colours, as we have seen, and with brilliant relief enamels. But Brongniart and his chemists seem to have preferred the most refractory porcelain they could compass, glazed with the native pegmatite of St. Yrieix without admixture, which needed the severest fire to vitrify it. A porcelain of this composition severely limits the range of underglaze colours (*au grand feu*), for the only ones attainable are the dark or light blues from oxide of cobalt, the tortoise-shell grounds, and the new chrome green grounds introduced by Vauquelin's preparation of the oxides of chromium. Similar difficulties attended the use of the older enamel-colours, but Bunel and Salvétat gradually perfected a new palette of enamel-colours which permitted the production of those elaborate copies of famous oil-paintings on huge, flat slabs of porcelain which are still to be seen in the museum at Sèvres, in the Louvre and elsewhere. Gilding was again lavishly employed with a variety of effects got by scouring

SEVRES

Figure of Bacchus, modelled by Le Mire.
Base ornamented with figures in high relief on blue ground,
in imitation of Wedgwood's jasper
Height (figure) 16½ in., diameter of base 6 in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

or burnishing the fired metal, and silver and platinum were both used extensively in conjunction with the gold or alone.

This development of the technical resources of Sèvres coincided with a revival of demands from the Court for the refurnishing of the various Imperial residences: for presents to Napoleon's marshals, and for diplomatic presents, which were once again made on the most lavish scale. Brongniart and his staff were continually called upon for novelties of construction or design, especially as from 1806. Napoleon and his Court paid frequent visits to the factory and at each visit made fresh demands for new productions in the most elaborate and expensive style of decoration. The famous painter David, a protégé of Napoleon's, was called in to advise, and his influence, and a little later that of Percier the architect, seems to have been unfortunate, to say the least, as in their hands the pieces were not so much "decorated" as "smothered" in painting and gilding, so that the porcelain itself tells for nothing except as the groundwork for this grandiose and inartistic display. The lavish production was still further stimulated by the necessity of refurnishing the Royal palaces, long denuded of their treasures, and this in itself was no light matter, for in addition to services of every description, garnitures, vases and trinkets of all kinds were needed for the palaces of the Tuileries, Versailles, the Trianons, Malmaison, Compiègne, Rambouillet, and Fontainebleau, as well as the Imperial palaces at Milan and Rome, which were furnished with great splendour. Sèvres had to provide all this as well as the regular demands of the Court, of Napoleon's relatives in Westphalia, Italy and Spain, and the most lavish diplomatic presents wherever they would be useful to his

personal or diplomatic schemes. While Napoleon was still only First Consul he presented Lord Malmesbury, on the signing of the Treaty of Amiens in 1801, with a table service of the famous tortoise-shell ground colour valued at 17,640 francs. After he was crowned as Emperor, in May, 1804, his demands for porcelain vases, services, trinkets and bijouterie of all kinds were on a scale of profusion which outrivalled even the demands of the Court of Louis XV. The famous " Olympic " service had as centre-piece a chariot of victory escorted by figures copied from those in the *Musée Napoléon*, while the pieces of the service were elaborately bordered with designs in heavy gilding on a chrome green ground, the reserved centres of the plates and dishes bearing paintings of Napoleon's victories.

In connexion with the famous table services of the time of the First Empire, one should mention the manufacture of large circular slabs of porcelain, as much as a yard in diameter, which were afterwards mounted in chased and gilded ormolu rims to form the tops of circular tables. One example, made in 1812 and signed by the painter Paranti, was presented to Queen Victoria by Napoleon III on her visit to Paris in 1855, after the Crimean War. An abbreviated description taken from Sir Guy Laking's account of the porcelains of the Royal collection will explain the style and pieces. " The table-top is a flat circular porcelain plaque, richly decorated and mounted in a rim of ormolu chased with typical ornaments of the First Empire. The cylindrical porcelain stem is shaped as a bundle of spears strapped together and resting upon a convex circular shield, which forms the base. The shield is modelled with scale ornament gilt in various shades of gold showing the crimson lining beneath. The whole rests on a square plinth of ormolu.

The decoration of the circular top displays very skilful handling of an extensive palette of colours. The ground colour is a deep green, totally opaque. Its enrichments are as follows: In the centre, wonderfully painted in imitation of an onyx cameo, is the profile bust of Alexander the Great. This is encircled by a frieze, gilded and painted to represent an ormolu appliqué, divided into three scenes illustrating the triumphs of Alexander. Beyond this is a narrow band of gold brilliantly burnished with conventional oak leaves. Placed outside this are twelve circular medallions, each painted in imitation of an onyx cameo, on which are respectively the portraits of Trajan, Constantine, Septimius Severus, Augustus, Pompeius, Scipio Africanus, Pericles, Miltiades, Themistocles, Hannibal, Mithridates, and Julius Cæsar. These medallions are framed by formal swags of fruit and flowers suspended from lions' masks, again painted to represent reliefs of chased ormolu. Outside each medallion is a narrow band of gold, burnished with formal laurel leaves. Finally, the border of the plaque is painted cameo-like with twelve oblong rectangular panels, on each of which is depicted a scene from classic history, one subject being divided from the other by the introduction of a gilt *fulmen* of Jupiter."

Further records of these victories exist in a series of large vases painted with truly Napoleonic subjects and all aiming at his glorification. Thus we have examples covered with crowded paintings of the "Emperor Saluting the Enemy's Wounded after Jena"; "Napoleon Entering Berlin"; "The Review of the Armies of the Emperor under the Walls of Vienna"; and "The Triumphal March of the Emperor." To this period, too, belong the vases of the "Four Seasons," bearing elaborate paintings of typical

flowers of each season, which are still preserved in the Trianon.

Marvellous among even these examples of the Napoleonic era for its crowded and intricate design is a "Medici" vase which, on a ground of royal blue, bears a bas-relief of the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise in 1810, which was designed by Isabey. The central feature of the design shows Napoleon giving his hand to Marie Louise; the Emperor and Empress, as well as the principal figures, are in court dress. They are preceded by the great dignitaries of the Empire and followed by the princesses of the Imperial family, whose trains are borne by Court chamberlains. Next come the generals, the diplomatic corps and members of the Academy in full dress, while high officers offering their arms to ladies of the Court bring up the rear. This group contains one hundred and fifteen figures, and below there is a crowd, mainly of women, who stretch their arms in acclamation. This subsidiary group represents between two and three thousand figures. The vase was not completed till 1813, though the modelling was commenced in 1810, and it is said to have cost 30,000 francs, a very probable sum considering all the work involved, and the consumption of gold and other materials.

It was, and I believe is, preserved in the Louvre with other notable vases of the epoch, as few of them appear to have left France. At all events the student who desires to study these giant vases must visit Paris and Versailles to see and appreciate their variety, though they all bear the distinctive stamp of the taste and ideas of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and leave one with the uncomfortable feeling that excessive knowledge and skill can combine to produce the greatest monstrosities where taste is lacking.

SÈVRES

Top of Work-table

Length 13¼ in., width 10⅝ in.

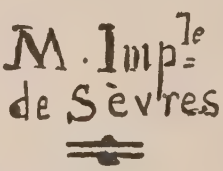
Wallace Collection.

Other colossal porcelain pieces made during this period were the porcelain columns, evidently based on the idea of Trajan's Column, one of which was over 10 metres high, while another, made in 1808 in commemoration of Austerlitz, is still preserved at Versailles and is over 5 metres high.

It seems remarkable that Sèvres, once so famous for its medallions, busts, and statuettes in biscuit porcelain, should have produced so few works in this style during the Napoleonic period. Possibly the Emperor preferred marble for such purposes, for busts of Napoleon in porcelain are scarce, and it seems incredible that they have disappeared if they were ever freely made ; for his contemporaries seem to have had a liking for representations of the man they hated and feared so much, and busts in marble and other fine statuary stones are not uncommon, though many of these are replicas of the more famous busts of an earlier date, called into being by the growth of the Napoleonic legend about the middle of the last century. When Paris was invested by the allied armies after Waterloo, the Prussians lay on the side towards Sèvres and St. Cloud, but the factory was protected from damage and indiscriminate looting. On July 3, 1815, an official seizure appears to have been made under the orders of Blücher, for 10,000 francs were taken in cash for the military chest of the 4th Prussian Corps, and an inventory was made of all the porcelain pieces with the intention of selling the more ordinary examples in Paris for the benefit of the Prussian army, while all the specimens made in commemoration of the history of Napoleon were to be packed and sent to Berlin. When Brongniart protested vigorously Blücher professed to offer a compromise for a further sum of 60,000 francs and the porcelains which had been sent to Berlin. Louis XVIII endorsed this pro-

test, pointing out that the Allies who had brought about his restoration were now plundering an establishment which belonged to his family and not to the State, but no compromise was acceptable to Blücher and his Prussians, so the works were actually plundered, and the stock from the warehouses and storerooms was carted off. When this disturbance had subsided, Brongniart appears to have raised money for the immediate expenses by a sale of the residual stock of the old soft-paste porcelains, both in white and in various stages of decoration, which had been concealed in the cellars of the factory.[1] The State subsidy granted to the factory appears to have been continued with little interruption at the annual rate of 200,000 to 215,000 francs, which was later increased by about one-half that amount in addition. The revolutionary disturbances of 1848 do not seem to have affected the position, though about this time the famous director, Brongniart, died, after having influenced the work of the factory more than any other single man, for he had long been recognized as the foremost authority on pottery and porcelain and had largely controlled its destinies through nearly half a century of activity and renown.

Marks:



Napoleon III

[1] Much of this soft-paste porcelain was brought to England and decorated by English painters in the Sèvres style, and the quantity must have been considerable, for this work went on down to about 1850, at the hands of the Randalls and others. Some of these English decorators were well known to me, and I remember their accounts of how the soft glaze seemed to ooze from the porcelain and cover the enamel-colours used for the decoration when it was refired.

SÈVRES

Milk-jug. Apple-green ground; panel painted; rich gilding
Height 4⅝ in., diameter 3½ in.

Victoria and Albert Museum.

Tea-pot. Turquoise ground; band of floral ornament; fine gilding
Height 4⅜ in., diameter 2⅞ in.

Milk-jug and Cover. Mounted silver-gilt; *bleu de roi* neck and cover; white interlaced scrolls edged with gold
Height 5 in., diameter 3½ in.

SÈVRES FROM NAPOLEON I TO NAPOLEON III

After the downfall of Napoleon there was a marked slackening in the doings of the Royal factory at Sèvres, a breathing space, as it were, between the end of one period of intense activity and the commencement of another. Brongniart was director throughout the reigns of Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Louis Philippe, but it was a very different Sèvres which he now governed. The extensive, even grandiose demands of the Court had ceased, except that there was some further production of great vases in the antique formula; for whatever else changes at Sèvres this fashion seems to survive, first in one form and then in another, as if the Greeks and Romans had said the last word in the shapes that were suitable for a material in which they never worked, and which is as far removed as possible from the potter's clay they used, except that it is a plastic substance which can be hardened by fire. Elaborate, even in a sense monumental, these enormous vases are entirely covered with painting and gilding, and, as if this were not enough, silver and platinum were also used to heighten the effect of the richer metal. The charm, the lightness and the grace of the soft-paste porcelain of the previous century leave no trace on these dull and uninspired pieces, for science seems to have presided over the decoration as well as the fabrication, and one can only wonder "how" and "why" they ever came to be made or esteemed. Many examples of these monotonous productions are still preserved in the Louvre, and in the Grand Trianon and other palaces at Versailles, but few exist to my knowledge outside France.[1]

[1] Two great vases of this style are illustrated in Figs. 59 and 60 of *A History and Description of French Porcelain*, by E. S. Auscher. Cassell and Co., 1905.

Another characteristic example of the porcelain of the period was a colossal inkstand bearing portraits of various princes of the Bourbon family, while various writing-desks and panels for the decoration of book-cases are also known, all made between 1820 and 1830. Of the same period is a snuff-box made for the King in 1832, which displays twenty-five prettily painted miniatures, the work of Madame Jacquotot.

Outrivalling the great vases in surmounting technical difficulties, there are still preserved in the museum at Sèvres a number of large rectangular porcelain slabs or plaques, displaying wonderful copies of famous pictures. The best-known painters of these were Madame Jacquotot, Madame Ducluzeau and M. Constantin.

Sculptured biscuit porcelain seems to have been but little made, though some busts and medallions of Louis Philippe and of the different members of his family exist, and some not very satisfactory decorative groups of figures were modelled by Klagmann.

From 1815 the two crossed L's appear again, with the fleur de lys as the general mark, with the date marks S Z (*seize*), D S (*dix-sept*), etc. In the reign of Charles X the mark was: 1824–27, two interlaced C's, with an X in the middle and a fleur de lys below; 1827–30 two interlaced C's, enclosing a fleur de lys. In addition to both monograms the word Sèvres is used, and the two last figures of the year appear as date mark. In 1830 C^{x} surmounted by a crown appears, and also a simpler mark consisting only of a fleur de lys, with the word Sèvres and the two last figures of the year. From 1830 to 1834 a circular stamp was used containing the word Sèvres, with a six-rayed star above it and the date mark below. From

1834 to 1848 the King's cipher L P (Louis Philippe) surmounted by the Royal crown was used, and this was accompanied by a date mark.

All these marks are in overglaze colours, blue, red or green, while other marks, also in overglaze blue, such as "C. H. Dreux," "C. H. Tuileries," etc., indicate pieces or services for use in the Royal châteaux.

SÈVRES UNDER NAPOLEON III

The works at Sèvres suffered what must have seemed an irreparable loss by the death of Brongniart on October 7, 1847, just before the revolutionary troubles which came to a head in 1848, but which seem to have passed over Sèvres without effect. Brongniart was succeeded by Ebelmen, his associate, and a member of the Institut, but he unfortunately died in March, 1852, so that his independent influence can only have been slight. Victor Regnault, the famous physicist, then became director, and retained the post practically through the reign of Napoleon III, retiring in 1870 under the disastrous blow inflicted by the death of his promising son Henri, the painter, who was killed fighting against the Prussians.

Regnault devoted his attention mainly to the improvement of the technical processes of porcelain manufacture, and invented methods of applying compressed air, or a vacuum, for keeping the huge porcelain vases in shape during their long slow drying before they could be handled for modelling and firing; and Sèvres once more embarked on the sea of production with huge porcelain vases, intended to rival or surpass all that had gone before

in this style. The methods of fabrication and decoration alike shared in this renewed activity, for vases and plaques were produced in abundance with rich and varied painting, mostly overglaze, and much gilding. The palette of overglaze colours was extended by the addition of a series of colours which needed a more severe fire to incorporate them with the glaze. Such combinations, known in England as "hard-kiln colours" and in France as *couleurs de demi-grand feu*, have since this time been widely used by porcelain-decorators everywhere, and as they can receive further decoration by gilding and other means, refired at a lower temperature, they have certain advantages over underglaze and ordinary enamel-colours, which give them an assured place among the varied resources of the modern decorator of porcelain. They have received much attention from the successive chemists at Sèvres—Salvétat, Lauth and Vogt[1]—and have been made and used with great success in England, as some of the English makers of ceramic colours have developed a considerable international trade in them.

Under Regnault an attempt seems to have been made to convert the works at Sèvres into a centre where every species of pottery, in addition to porcelain, could be made and studied experimentally, with the aim of strengthening and encouraging the French manufacturers of faïence, terra-cotta, and glazed and enamelled pottery of all kinds, who were feeling the effects of foreign competition, especially from England. A special department was founded for this purpose, and large garden vases, basins and fountains were made and used in connexion with various official buildings

[1] Anyone interested in these technical developments may be recommended to consult *La Céramique industrielle*, by A. Granger. Paris, Gauthier-Villars, 1905.

SÈVRES

"Jewelled" Ewer and Dish

Ewer—Height $7\frac{3}{8}$ in., width $5\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Dish—Height $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., length $7\frac{5}{8}$ in., depth $8\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Wallace Collection.

throughout the departments, which seem to have exercised considerable influence on the doings of all the French potters from the north to the south; and everywhere there is to be found the influence of this official *cachet*, which seems as precious to the Frenchman as his individual freedom is to the Englishman. The great revival of earthenware and stoneware which is here indicated lies outside the purview of this book, but an interesting sketch of its origins will be found in the supplementary chapter of Mr. Solon's "History and Description of French Faïence,"[1] which that talented artist and writer added to the work at my solicitation. After the reorganization of Sèvres, following 1870–71, this branch of pottery-making was abandoned, and the factory once again devoted all its energies to its original purpose, the cultivation of the manufacture of porcelain, and the discovery and application of fresh methods of manufacture and decoration for the benefit not only of Sèvres but of all the makers of porcelain throughout France.

In this connexion, too, one might just mention the foundation at Limoges of a ceramic museum, which deserves to be studied almost as well as the more famous museum at Sèvres. This museum at Limoges was founded by M. Adrien Dubouché, who for a time also largely supported it by gifts and donations of money; and he was concerned in the foundation and the early development of a school of decorative art in the same great centre of the French porcelain industry, now almost as important in France as the district of Stoke-upon-Trent is in England. Mention should also be made of the work done at Limoges by two ceramic chemists, M. Halot and M. Peyrusson, who spent

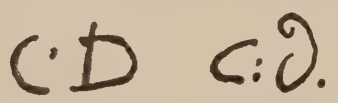
[1] *History and Description of French Faïence*, by M. L. Solon. London, Cassell and Co., Ltd.

years of labour and experiment in producing the extensive palette of colours, both underglaze and onglaze, now used by the potters of Limoges and other French porcelain centres. We must also mention the introduction of lithographic transfers, which if not invented at Limoges have been extensively made and used there, and which in their best types flatter the ignorant by presenting the appearance at first sight of skilfully painted ornament. Gilding in ornamental patterns or sprigs can be applied in the same way, and when well prepared has an astonishing amount of wear in it. The porcelains of Limoges, and those made and decorated in similar styles at Vierzon by Hache and Co., and at Mehun-sur-Yèvre by Pillivuyt and Co., are largely used not only in France, but in America and England, though the various countries of North and South America form their most important market. These works also provide white pieces for the Parisian decorators, of whom there are always a number at work, as well as the Parisian makers of special wares such as porcelain flowers, dolls' heads, toy services for children, and the biscuit vases with flowers, and figures or groups so freely used for church decoration in France and other countries.

Limoges has, however, become such an important centre of the French porcelain industry that we must devote a little space to its special doings, and for this purpose we must skip back almost a century. The discovery of the suitable clays and rocks for the making of hard porcelain at St. Yrieix, in the Perigord, by Millot and Macquer, has already been recounted (see pp. 168–70), and by an edict of 1783, Massié, Fourniera, and Grellet were authorized to make porcelain with the registered mark C D, but in May, 1784, their factory was acquired, on the King's account, as a branch

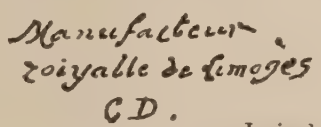
of the Royal factory at Sèvres. This branch factory was under the management of M. Grellet the younger to 1788, when he was replaced by M. Alluaud, a merchant of Limoges. For reasons not perhaps difficult to understand this idea of a branch factory did not prove very practical, and it was sold to M. Alluaud about 1798. The business is still in existence under the style of "Pouyat and Alluaud," who make excellent porcelain of the well-known Limoges type in table services and general domestic articles. The porcelains made here, when the factory was a dependency of Sèvres, have a good, hard, white body, with a white glaze, often showing little spots and imperfections. The usual decoration was in underglaze blue, or with flowers in enamel-colours, while some examples are known with figure subjects *en grisaille;* and there was likewise a limited production of statuettes, figure groups and medallions in biscuit porcelain, which can only be identified now by their marks. The earliest mark is that authorized when the factory was established in 1783, viz.:

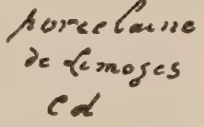
In red or violet, also incised



In blue, red or gold, also incised

Pieces with the mark C D incised, but with a Sèvres mark below, are believed to have been decorated at Sèvres, when this Limoges factory was working as a branch of the Royal factory. Between 1784 and 1789 the following marks seem to have been used:

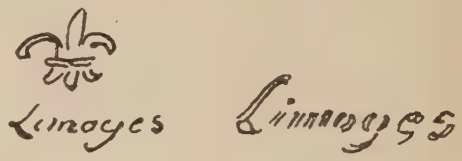




Incised or in red

In the second of these the inscription is in red with the letters c d incised in the paste.

Marks found on the medallions and biscuit figures and groups are incised thus :



PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.4
F.20.421

NK 4370 .B78 1921a v.1
Burton, William, 1863-
A general history of
porcelain

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